

LIBRARY
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
AT
PRINCETON, N. J.
OF
SAMUEL AGNEW,
OF PHILADELPHIA. PA.

Letter...

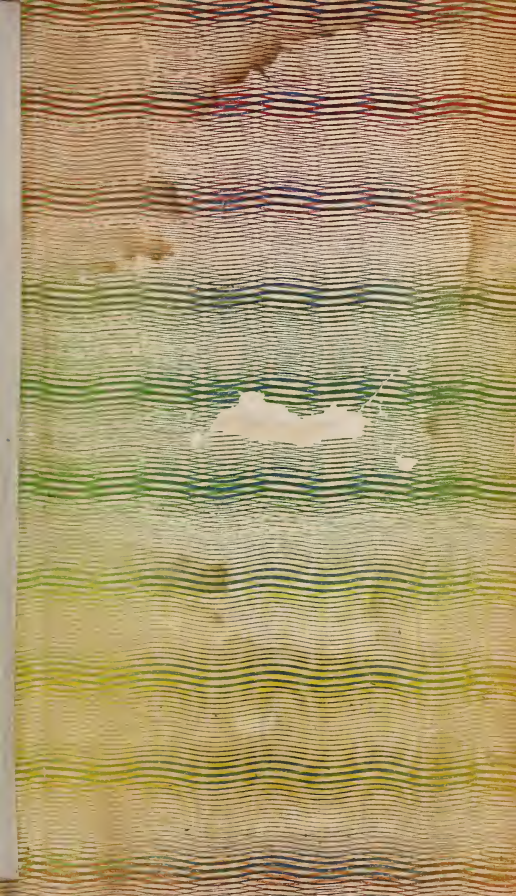
No.

March 25th 1858

BX 5136 .P73 1840

Pratt, John B. 1798-1869.

The old paths, where is the
good way, or, The notes of



18-1
41





THE
OLD PATHS,
WHERE IS
THE GOOD WAY:
OR
THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH,
IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH
THE CHILD OF THE CHURCH
IS EXAMINED CONCERNING
Ecclesiastical Principles.

BY
THE REV. J. B. PRATT, M.A.
EPISCOPAL MINISTER, ST. JAMES', CRUDEN,
AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ERROL.

WHAT IS TRUTH? St. JOHN xviii. 38.

THIRD EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED.

OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER & CO.
J. G. F. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON:
GRANT AND SON, EDINBURGH:
BROWN AND CO. ABERDEEN.

MDCCCXL.



[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

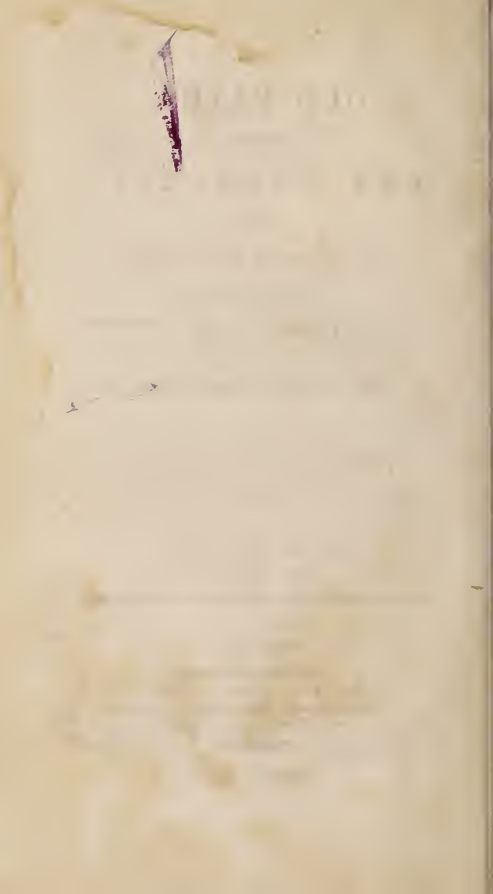
[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

OXFORD:
PRINTED BY I. SHRIMPTON.

"The grand, and indeed the only character of truth, is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of *fair* discussion.

"Before experience can be used with advantage, there is one preliminary step to make, which depends wholly upon ourselves: it is the absolute dismissal and clearing the mind of all *prejudice*, from whatever source arising, and the determination to stand or fall by the result of a direct appeal to facts in the first instance, and of strict logical deduction from them afterwards."—*Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, by SIR J. F. W. HERSCHEL.

"READ—not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse;—but *weigh and consider*"
LORD BACON.





THE OLD PATHS,

&c.

Part First.

Q. GOOD CHRISTIAN, you no doubt consider it a matter of very great importance to be a member of the Church of Christ?

A. I consider it a matter of the very greatest importance. Our Lord came to re-establish the Church of God in the world, that, through this means, men might be taken out of the kingdom of darkness, brought into the kingdom of righteousness, and trained up for the kingdom of heaven hereafter. It is by being a member of the Church, that I have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the will of God, and of being supported by the Divine aid; it is thus that I am joined to Christ, as a member to the head. "I am the Vine," says our Lord, "ye are the branches." Hence I look on my connexion with the Church of Christ, as the ground

on which my union with the Redeemer, and, consequently, my acceptance with God, and my everlasting happiness, depend. These are matters about which I cannot be unconcerned, matters with which no wise man will dare to trifle.

Q. But there are many Christian communities differing among themselves on various important points, but each professing to be the true Church of Christ. Pray how are you able, in this case, to determine to which of the various communities you ought to give the preference?

A. One man adheres to the community preferred by his father.—Another is a member of that which can claim a high antiquity.—A third prefers that which is countenanced by the State.—And a fourth is willing to attach himself to that which is most fashionable. But none of these are the reasons by which my choice is determined; for, although I admit that I would not rashly, and without cause, abandon the religious community to which my father adhered, yet his adherence is only a proof of his own wisdom or folly, but no indisputable evidence of the truth.—Although I admit that antiquity, in matters connected with religion, carries a powerful influence along with it, as nothing in this respect can be wholly correct, which cannot claim the sanction of antiquity; yet this is no good proof of the truth, as

error may grow old, and we know that many errors were beginning to appear even in the Apostolic age, still no length of time can change the character of either truth or error.—Although I would not, without reason, separate myself from the religious community countenanced by the State, because the State may be the handmaid of the Church, and enable her to pour out her blessings with a more liberal hand; yet the State might support Moham-medism, as well as Christianity, and therefore its support cannot be a safe guide to any one in search of the true Church of Christ.—And although I would not, without due consideration, withdraw from that community which has the support of the majority of my countrymen, as there probably is some reason why they prefer one ecclesiastical creed to another; yet I know that the truth has rarely been popular, and that in many countries, the great majority are at this very day supporters of error. The countenance, therefore, of the majority, does not operate in determining my choice in this matter; but I am guided to the Church of Christ, by the *marks* of truth which the *true Church* invariably exhibits. It is by these, and these only, that my choice is determined.

Q. I am happy to hear that you have discovered marks, by which the true Church may be dis-

tinguished; but are you sure that they are such as cannot be mistaken?

A. If, after careful examination, they could be mistaken, they would not be distinct marks, nor could they be of any use in directing my choice. They may indeed be counterfeited, even as Satan can occasionally transform himself into an angel of light; but they can never be so counterfeited, as to render it difficult for any one, who will take the least trouble to investigate the matter, to detect the imposition.

Q. I am most anxious to hear you define these marks which will thus infallibly direct any one to the Church of God, how many Christian communities soever may surround her. Pray what are these *Marks* or *Notes* of the Church?

A. They are few, plain, simple, decisive, such as any one may understand, and any child may remember: viz. 1. *The word of God*; 2. *The means of grace*; and 3. *A regular authorized Ministry*^a. These are the *marks* which distinguish the Church of God. The word of God, as always understood and interpreted by the faithful, must be the only rule of faith and doctrine^b. The appointed means

^a Vide Acts ii. 41, 42; Articles XIX. and XXIII; Homily for Whit-Sunday, 2d part; and Field's Books of the Church, b. ii.

^b "The Scripture," saith Vincentius Lirinensis, "is full and

of grace, must be regularly and duly administered; and the Ministers themselves must have a commission derived from Christ, empowering them to act in His stead. Where these three marks are clear and distinct, there the Church of God is to be found. Where any of them is changed or counterfeited; there the Church is in error. Where any of them is wanting, there the Church is not.

Q. On what grounds do you found your belief, that these are the marks of the Church of God?

A. We read that our first parents were placed in the garden of Eden, during their state of innocency, and there is reason to suppose, that this was a place of training for higher joys in heaven. The garden of God, may therefore be considered as figurative of the Church of God, which is a state or place where men are trained for the society of heaven. While in Paradise, or the Church of God, our first parents were blessed with *Divine instruction*, strengthened by *Divine aid*, and honoured with the *Divine Presence*. These were the three things which distinguished man's primary state of probation; the three things on which his happiness chiefly, or rather

sufficient to all purposes; but because of the manifold turnings of heretiques, it is necessary that the line of Prophetical and Apostolical interpretation be drawn down and directed unto us, according to the rule of Ecclesiasticall and Catholique sense." Field, b. iv. c. 14.

wholly, depended; the three things by which he was to be prepared for still higher joys, among the hosts surrounding the throne of the Most High. By these things, therefore, a state of happiness is determined. When our first parents transgressed, they were driven from the *Divine Presence*, deprived of the *Divine assistance*, and, as fallen creatures, no longer enjoyed the *Divine instruction*. The absence of these is what produces a state of misery.—But through the gracious goodness of God, all that was lost in Adam, was to be redeemed and restored in Christ. The happy state in which Adam was at first placed, was the Kingdom or Church of God. The miserable state into which he was driven, is denominated the world, or kingdom of darkness. The Redeemer came to re-establish the Church or Kingdom of God in the world, and under His banner to conduct mankind to a state where they should once more enjoy all the blessings which Adam had enjoyed. The *will of God* was revealed for man's instruction; the *Divine assistance* was promised through certain appointed means; and the *Divine Presence* was restored through the Redeemer, Who is EMMANUEL, God with us. In anticipation of the fulfilment of the great work of redemption, these blessings were conferred on the human race from Adam downwards, and, in consequence of the same

glorious work, they will be continued to the latest generation. These three things have, therefore, distinguished the Church of the living God at all times and in all places. They were clearly to be seen in Eden; they were lost in Adam; they are restored in Christ; and I feel confident, that the word of God, from beginning to end, will confirm this doctrine.

Q. I perceive that you understand the subject; but that I may be more fully acquainted with your belief, I should be glad to hear you enter a little more particularly into this very important matter. Why, then, is the first of these marks necessary to the existence of the Christian Church in purity and perfection?

A. Without the knowledge of the Divine will, it is impossible that the Church of God can be established. The sole intention of the Church, is to train its members for heaven, by making them acquainted with the will of God, and teaching them how to honour Him in all things. "The visible Church of Christ, is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached^c." If the Divine instruction were withheld, mortals could not discover how to make this life a preparation for another and a better. They would

^c Article XIX.

remain in bondage to Satan, and their actions in this life would fit them for the kingdom of darkness. The habits which are formed here, will determine the place for which we are best fitted hereafter. Without instruction from above, it is easy to say, what the habits of the human race would, in all probability, be; little allied to the manners of heaven, they would fit us only for the society of the wicked.

Q. Why is the second mark necessary?

A. Man is by nature weak, and, it may be said, spiritually dead. "He cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." The sentence was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When, therefore, Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and so cast off his allegiance to the Almighty, he suffered the effects of the sentence, and became spiritually dead. Spiritual life could be restored only by the Almighty. But by our blessed Lord's death and resurrection, the penalty of transgression was paid, and the principle of spiritual life restored to the human race. By

the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are begotten again unto a lively hope^d. But it was further necessary, that this life should come to the birth, and be nourished and supported. For these purposes, our Lord graciously instituted means of grace, through which we are buried with Him in His death, and born again to newness of life^e; and through which spiritual life is nourished and supported in such manner, that the Christian, who has due recourse to them, gradually grows in grace and strength. Hence the necessity of the means of grace being found in the Church of God. Without these, there could be no *lively* members of Christ. It is through the Divine aid that spiritual life is begun in the soul; it is by the same aid that it is born, strengthened, and matured.

Q. What are the principal means of grace which have been instituted for the accomplishment of these important ends?

A. The two Sacraments, of Baptism^f and the Supper of the Lord, may be said to be the principal means of grace: the former for beginning, or, cor-

^d Vide 1 Pet. i. 3.

^e Rom. vi. 4.

^f Confirmation is not a sacrament, but the seal of Baptism. The baptized child, come of age, ratifies and confirms in its own person what was formerly promised and vowed in its name by those who presented it to be baptized.

rectly speaking, for bringing to the birth the life in the soul, the latter for nourishing and supporting it.

Q. What do you mean by saying, that these are the principal means of grace? are there any other such means?

A. Yes! The word of God, prayer and thanksgiving, the Christian Ministry, and every sacred rite peculiar to the Church in her purest days; in a word, every thing appointed by the Redeemer for leading men to repentance, faith, and obedience, may be said to be means of grace; but all these are included in the obligations connected with the two Sacraments, so that, generally speaking, these may be reckoned the only appointed means of grace, which constitute one of the marks of the Church of God. Correctly speaking, the due and regular celebration of the Eucharist, may be considered as including all that is generally understood by the term, *Divine worship*. In speaking of *the means of grace* as a *mark* of the Church, I therefore understand the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; but in such a sense as to include all things divinely appointed in subordination to them, so as that they, when duly administered and received, may, in subserviency to our Lord's death and resurrection, be effectual in re-

storing spiritual life, and the image of God in the soul. Whoever views the two Sacraments in their full character, will find that they both have reference to Him, through whom alone life and happiness can be enjoyed. They both direct our attention to what God forbids, teaches, and commands; and, as the commencement^g and nourishment of spiritual life, embrace all the circumstances in which man stands in need of the Divine assistance and grace; so there are only two Sacraments generally necessary to salvation, but these are so necessary, that where they are not, the Church of God cannot, in the ordinary course of events, ever be established.

Q. Why is the third mark necessary?

A. Because Christ is not merely the only Redeemer of the human race, but also the only Mediator between God and man. Hence, correctly speaking, He is the only *Prophet* that can instruct us in the Divine will; the only *Priest* that can make atonement for us, and dispense to us the riches of God's grace; and the only *King* that can give laws to the Kingdom of Peace, or Church of God. "Without Me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing."

^g Speaking as men, we refer to the day of the birth, as the *commencement* of life; speaking as Christians, we make use of similar language. The *principle* of spiritual life was restored to all men, by the resurrection of Christ; still, "except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (St. John iii. 3.)

Therefore, none but the Messiah, or one whom He has authorized to act in His stead, can, as a Prophet or Teacher, authoritatively proclaim "peace and good will towards men^h;" nor, as a Priest, receive a child of Adam from the outer state in which it is naturally born, into the Church of God, and there administer to it, as the adopted child of God, the bread of life and cup of salvation; nor, as a King or Governor, give laws to the kingdom of righteousness, and take care that all things be done decently and in order. Without a regularly authorized Ministry, there can be no Church.

Q. What do you mean by this? Explain it a little more fully.

A. Adam, when he transgressed the Divine command, was driven out of the Church of God into the outer state of the world, and its gate was guarded by the angel of death; so that man, by his own exertions, could never have laid hold on life, nor forced his way back into the kingdom of the Father. The world, or kingdom of darkness, into which he was driven, means a state where the light of Divine truth shone not; where the Divine grace was not enjoyed; where the Divine authority was not acknowledged; where ignorance prevailed, where wickedness triumphed, where Satan reigned.

^h Rom. x. 15.

The Son of God alone had power to take man out of this wretched state, to overcome the angel of death, and so to lead man, under His banner, into the kingdom of righteousness. Hence it is, that we ascribe our victory solely to the Redeemer, and believe that it is only under His standard, that we can escape death, and find admission into the Father's kingdom; or that when there, we can only by Him be instructed in the knowledge of heavenly truth, or blessed with the means of obtaining the aid of the Holy Spirit, or taught to submit with due reverence to the authority of the Lord of heaven and earth; and hence it is, that during our Lord's absence, no man can act in His stead without His full commission. It is the ambassador for Christ, who proclaims the glad tidings of salvation to all nationsⁱ; and beseeches men to be reconciled to God^k: who receives the child of Adam into the family of God, and teaches this holy family all things whatsoever that Christ has commanded^l, and dispenses to its members the bread of life, and the cup of salvation: and who preserves order and decency in its affairs, by reproof, rebuking, exhorting, and watching in all things; thus making full proof of his ministry^m. But he does these

ⁱ St. Mark xvi. 15.

^k 2 Cor. v. 20.

^l St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

^m 2 Tim. iv. 2, &c.

things, not in his own name, or by his own authority, but in the name of his Master, and by virtue of his commission. Were he to assume this commission, we have no authority to conclude, that the Prince of Peace would ratify his deeds; and were he to act in his own name, it would be impiously to take on himself the office of the Redeemer; but we know, that there is no salvation in any other name but in that of Jesus only; and whether the carnal mind can understand it or not, the truth is fully established, that without the Son of God, nothing can be done in the Church or Kingdom of God.

Q. I perceive that you have a very correct knowledge concerning the *necessity* of the distinguishing marks of the Church. I should like to know your opinion concerning the *sacredness* of their nature. With regard to the first, then, as several places of the revealed Word of God, may to some appear rather too strict, or too obscure, to be wholly agreeable to the inclinations or prejudices of many, who would otherwise be willing to receive and defend it, as the rule of faith and practice; may not such disagreeable passages be omitted, and an abridgment made, suitable to the creed of all the various communities of Christians?

A. God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, and, therefore, some things in revelation may be opposed

to human views, and disagreeable to human prejudices; but it is not to forward the former, nor to flatter the latter, that the will of God is revealed, but to direct our views to heaven, and to reduce our prejudices to compliance with the habits of the heavenly hosts. It would, therefore, be altogether dangerous and wrong, to interfere with the Word of God in any way whatever. It is full and complete, and men must, if they would make this life a preparation for a better, bring their opinions to an agreement with its declarations, and not venture to reduce its declarations to their opinions. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvationⁿ." The reception of the Word of God, is one of the marks of the true Church, and it may well be so; for man is naturally ignorant of the Divine will; that will which is revered in heaven, and which must be studied here, otherwise the Church militant cannot be a fit preparation for the Church triumphant. In one word, then, it is my belief, that no one can have a title to be reckoned a child of God, who would venture to interfere with His holy Word.

ⁿ Article VI.

The good Christian must receive the revealed Word entire, and preserve it entire^o; and any man, or society of men, who ventures to alter, to add, or to diminish, is endeavouring to obliterate one of the marks of the Church, and, consequently, must be in great error.

Q. This may be the case with regard to the first mark of the Church; but does the same thing hold good in reference to the second, or the means of grace, by which the *Divine aid* is graciously communicated? That is, may not some of these means be such, that they may safely be omitted, or may not others more noble, or more suitable to the opinions or prejudices of men, be beneficially substituted?

A. No man can either alter or amend any of the marks of the Church, without great detriment to himself, or even without sin against God. The *outward means* of grace, can have no efficacy whatever without the Divine blessing. But this blessing is no where promised to human inventions in preference to the Divine institutions. When men throw seed into the earth, it is in compliance with a divinely instituted means, and therefore the blessing of God accompanies the means, and causes the seed to spring up and bear fruit. But if men were to condemn the wisdom of God, and instead of seed,

° Rev. xxii. 18.

throw in gold, or silver, or stones, into the earth, and expect that the blessing of God would accompany their labours, and cause an abundant crop to come up; experience would at once convince them, that the wisdom of man is folly, when put in competition with the wisdom of God; and further, that the Almighty would check such presumption, and withhold His blessing from such labours of folly. In like manner, I believe that the blessing of God accompanies the simple means of grace which our Lord instituted, but that it would not be poured out on means of human device, how splendid soever they might be. God is jealous of His attributes, and will allow no man to set up his judgment in opposition to the Divine wisdom. I also believe, that all the instituted means of grace are requisite to convey the Divine assistance necessary to fit me for heaven, and carry me thither. None of them, therefore, can be either slighted or neglected, without loss and without detriment. I cannot climb the steep path of heaven by my own strength. In reference to the means of grace, therefore, as well as to the word of God, man must reduce his prejudices to an agreement with the Divine wisdom, and not attempt to sway the Divine wisdom to an agreement with human prejudices. In the case of the means of grace, such

an attempt would be to obliterate one of the marks of the Church, and they who believe that they may safely attempt this, do greatly err.

Q. But may not greater liberty be taken with the third mark? For instance, may not an ambassador for Christ, by which means the *Divine Presence* is represented in the Church, be appointed to his office in a way suited to the opinions and prejudices of men, and not according to one uniform and invariable mode?

A. The marks of truth are all equally sacred, all distinctly inscribed by the finger of God, and never to be altered by human interference, or in compliance with human prejudice. God has graciously instituted means, through which the ambassador for Christ may receive his commission. Such an ambassador can do nothing in his own name, nor can his deeds be valid, unless sanctioned by Him, in whose name he acts. It is Christ's Presence, in the person of His ambassador, that gives effect to every act of the Christian Minister. It is, therefore, the *commission*, and *not* the individual, that is to be looked to in this matter. A heathen might probably go through the forms peculiar to the Christian Church; but the acts of a heathen could never be accounted of any value as sacred ordinances. The necessity of a regular com-

mission, is therefore obvious to every candid and unprejudiced Christian. As the *Divine will* is made known through *visible* means; as the *Divine aid* is communicated through *visible* means; so the *Divine Presence* is also represented in the Church through *visible* means. As the word of God and the means of grace, are connected with outward and visible signs, which cannot be altered without destroying their value and efficacy; so it is with the Divine commission. In this case, too, the prejudices of man, must yield to the wisdom of God; and the schemes of human invention must totally fail in producing the effect peculiar to the institutions of God. No man can have any right to stand in Christ's stead, without Christ's commission; nor in any sense to represent the Divine Presence, unless divinely appointed to do so. It is therefore never to be forgotten, that one of the greatest privileges and advantages of the Church, is, that in it, the Divine Presence is ever, in some sense, to be found. "Without Me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing;" but, thanks be to God, He has also said, "Lo! *I am with you always.*" None, therefore, can interfere with this matter, or take the honour of the Priesthood to himself^p, but with the utmost danger and detriment to those who trust in his

^p Heb. v. 4.

ministrations, and with the greatest insult to the honour and wisdom of God, whose presence in the Church he presumes to represent^a. He, who pretends to be in Christ's stead without His commission, handed down in a manner as visible as that in which the word of God, and the means of grace, have been continued in the Church, is endeavouring to blot out one of the marks of the Church, and therefore must be in great error.

Q. But is not *the Divine Presence* connected in some way with each of the marks of the Church?

A. The *Divine Presence* in the Church, is one of those high mysteries in which we have full faith^r; and in connexion with which, is one of the greatest privileges that it is possible for us to enjoy, or even to conceive; but in our present imperfect state, we are unable to understand the manner in which the presence of God is with us, or to speak definitely concerning this great truth. It ought never to be forgotten, that we are expected to walk by *faith*, and not by *sight*, during our sojourn in the Church militant; and hence, that every thing connected with our most holy religion, has something in it of a mysterious character, calculated, at once, to remind us of the infinite superiority of God's ways to our ways, and to teach us humility in the presence

^a St. Matt. vii. 22.

^r St. John xiv. 15—26.

of Him, whose “footsteps are not known.” It is clearly revealed that the Divine Presence is in the Church, in a distinct, abstract, and highly mysterious manner^s; although not manifested to our senses, as in the temple and above the mercy-seat. It is by this mysterious habitation of the Most High in His Church, that we are made lively members of Christ—one with Him, and He one with us^t—and that all the members of His body are united in one holy spirit^u. But that the *Divine Presence* is to be found in connexion with the *Word of God*, the *means of grace*, and the *Christian Ministry*, is also most true. The *word of God*, in the mouth of His commissioned servants, is as fire^x: the *word*, when spoken by the Son of God, was with power^y; and were the Divine Presence not with it to give it effect, we may conclude, that it would be powerless in converting men to the truth; “for,” says St. Paul, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life^z.” “The *words* that I speak unto you,” says our blessed Lord, “they are spirit and they are life^a,” and the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews^b, says, “the *word of God* is quick

* St. Matt. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20.

^u 1 Cor. vi. 17. xii. 13.

^y St. Luke iv. 32.

^a St. John vi. 63.

^t St. John xvii. 21, &c.

^x Jer. v. 14.

^z 2 Cor. iii. 6.

^b Chap. iv. 12.

and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”—In the sacramental *means of grace*, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, the Divine Presence is, without doubt, to be found. In reference to Baptism, our Lord’s words are, “Except a man be born of water and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God^c.” In this Sacrament, we are baptized into Christ’s death, and raised to newness of life in His resurrection^d; but we cannot be thus renewed, unless God be present. The Apostle, however, tells us, that He is present, and that it is by His Spirit, that we are baptized into the body of Christ^e.—In the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, Christ is verily and indeed present, although in a mysterious or spiritual manner. None who take the Holy Scriptures as their rule, and follow the voice of the Church as their guide, can entertain but one opinion concerning this important truth. “I am the living Bread,” said our Lord, “which came down from heaven: except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you^f.” “And He took bread and

^c St. John iii. 5.

^e 1 Cor. xii. 13.

^d Rom. vi. 3, &c.

^f St. John vi. 51, &c.

gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me; likewise the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you^g." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."—In the *Christian Ministry*, the Divine Presence is also to be found. "I will not leave you comfortless," said our Lord to His Apostles, "I will come to you^h." And in reference to the same great mystery, the following words are very remarkable; "The *glory* which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One; I *in them*, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in oneⁱ." That the Divine Presence was not to be confined to the Apostles, but to be extended to the Priesthood in all ages, is evident, from the terms in which our Lord delivered His commission to the eleven: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world^k."—Thus, there can be no doubt, but that the Divine Presence is connected with each of the marks of the Church. It is this, which gives to the *Word*, the *Sacraments*, and the *Ministry*, an importance which they otherwise could not have.—The Divine Presence in these, is

^g St. Luke xxii. 19, &c.

^h St. John xiv. 18. 28.

ⁱ St. John xvii. 22.

^k St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

a high mystery, which the world cannot see¹, but which involves an unspeakable comfort to the faithful, and an incalculable loss to those who separate themselves and fall away.

Q. It would appear, that all these marks are of a very sacred character, and that the least interference with any one of them must be highly injurious to the portion of the Church which would venture so to meddle. Can you then inform me, if any portions of the Church have become defective or impure through want of due respect for the first mark?

A. Yes! By departing from the revealed word of truth as the only rule of faith and practice, many parts of the Christian Church have become grossly impure and corrupt: so much so, that in some instances, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." The Church has lost her beauty, and her candlestick has been removed; the inhabitants of places once highly favoured, have become ignorant of the truth, and are again the slaves of the wicked one. In other parts of the Christian world, the word of God has in a great measure been expelled from the Church^m, and hence an inlet to every error in doctrine and practice has been opened, and

¹ St. John xiv. 19, 20. xvi. 16.

^m About the year 1215, the use of the Holy Scriptures was prohibited by the Council of Toulouse.

Churchmen, instead of being an honour, have become a disgrace to their holy profession. Again, among the various religious communities, Holy Scripture has been so expounded, that one part of it becomes repugnant to the otherⁿ. No portion of the Church can be justified in prohibiting its members from reading the word of God, which as a lamp ought to direct the Christian's steps in the paths of righteousness; and it is a strong proof that the portion of the Church, which so prohibits the use of the word of God, is conscious of some gross corruption within its own sphere. Neither can any religious communion be a safe place of refuge, in which so partial an interpretation of the revealed word of God is given, as interferes with the eternal attributes of God, and mars the grand plan of human redemption. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached." Hence any community of Christians, that prohibits the Divine Word, is endeavouring to screen its faults by concealing one of the marks of truth; and any community that misinterprets it, is attempting to support some peculiar system, by means nearly similar. This very circumstance must excite more than a suspicion, that such communities are in error.

ⁿ Vide Appendix, Note A.

Q. Have any portions of the Church become defective or impure through want of due reverence for the second mark?

A. Yes! Some portions of the Church have dared to alter the means which God appointed for conveying His blessings: on the one hand, adding to their number, and, on the other, interfering with those originally instituted. Christ ordained two sacraments, as generally necessary to salvation; but some portions of the Church have increased the number to seven. Our Lord expressly told His Apostles how the sacraments were to be administered, but some portions of the Church have taken away the cup from the laity. Nor is this all. The Apostolic doctrine is, that Christ, as the great High-Priest in His Church, offered Himself without spot to God—One sacrifice, Once for all—by which One offering, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified: and, that after He had offered this One sacrifice for sins, He for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool^o; but in direct contradiction of this doctrine, portions of the Church profess, “that in the Mass there is offered to God, a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that, in the most holy

^o Vide Hebrews, chap. ix. and x.

sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and *substantially*, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ^p." By this bold conduct, human wisdom has been exalted above the wisdom of God, the Divine institutions have been superseded by the inventions of men, and spiritual life has been made to feed on meat prepared by human hands, instead of the heavenly manna provided by the Almighty. Other religious communities have degraded these high and holy mysteries into mere rites. They look upon Baptism as little else than an inefficacious form, and the Communion of our blessed Lord's body and blood, as nought but a bare repetition of the Supper, and thus in this holy Sacrament, do not discern the Lord's body. They would esteem it gross superstition, to call Baptism the washing of regeneration^q, or the Lord's Supper the Christian sacrifice, in which the *One sacrifice* for sin, offered Once for all^r, is represented and shewn forth till the coming of our Lord^s. They throw over their doctrines a thin veil of apparent respect for things sacred, and even many who are really pious are thus blinded; but through such a flimsy covering, may easily be seen the well-marked features of

p Tridentine Creed.

q Tit. iii. 5.

r Heb. ix. 25. 28 ; x. 14.

s 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Socinianism, German Neology or Rationalism, and other dangerous enemies of the truth, which, on favourable occasions, would boldly deny the efficacy of every means of grace, and the merits of the Lord that bought them^t. This is at once dangerous to man, and insulting to the wisdom and goodness of God. Thus portions of the Church have so greatly erred, that communion with them is far from safe.

Q. Have any portions of the Church become defective or impure through want of due respect for the third mark?

A. Yes! Our Lord, speaking of what should happen to the Church in the latter days, says, "For

^t In the Jewish Passover, there was a *typical* and *bloody* sacrifice, indicating what was to take place; in the Lord's Supper, there is a *commemorative* and *unbloody* sacrifice, reminding us of what has been accomplished. But in the former, there was no actual offering of Christ, for then must He have suffered often, and therefore no inherent efficacy; neither is there in the latter, but as it is blessed by God as the appointed means of shewing forth, or keeping in remembrance, the great and atoning sacrifice and death of Christ, which is alone efficacious in taking away sin; which is alone acceptable to God; which is alone necessary to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; and which has already been offered and accepted, and can never be offered again. The Apostle's words are explicit in regard to this important doctrine; "Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He have often suffered since the foundation of the world; but now *Once* in the end of the world, hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Alas ! the prediction has not fallen to the ground ; for many have arisen, who, without any commission derived regularly from Christ, have taken upon themselves to act as His ambassadors ; that is, in our Lord's words, " saying, I am Christ." About the middle of the sixteenth century after Christ, this dreadful evil came upon several parts of the Christian world. At that time, the Church in Britain, and some parts of the continent, was employed in throwing off the errors which she had, from neglect of the revealed word of God, contracted during the lapse of ages. Numbers then began to maintain, that on that extraordinary occasion, an extraordinary way of ordination was justifiable^u, viz. that any man who felt himself disposed to proclaim the good news of salvation, might very warrantably consider our Lord's commission, ' Go ye and teach all nations,' as addressed to himself, and so might take out a commission immediately from Jesus Christ. The channel through which *orders* in the Christian Church had been transmitted, was a subject about which, as they

^u Vide Conf. of Faith, Direc. sec. 11, 12.

frankly avowed, they gave themselves no trouble^x. On this principle numbers acted. They not only bound themselves to endeavour the extirpation of Church government by Archbishops, Bishops, &c. but they began, without any commission whatever, to act as ambassadors for Christ; to dispense the means of grace, and to do all things which a regularly commissioned servant has the Redeemer's authority to do^y. What is perhaps still more extraordinary, those men, who thus assumed the office of the Priesthood, without any commission derived through a visible channel from Christ, and even in utter contempt of such commission, proceeded a step farther, and gave a commission to others to go

^x Vide Dr. Mitchell's Presbyterian Letters, p. 354.

^y Vide any impartial history of the Church at the time of the Reformation in Scotland. Take, for example, the following passage from Dr. Russell's History of the Church in Scotland, vol. i. p. 247. "In the early stage of the Reformation, a great laxity of opinion was allowed to prevail, in regard to the nature and origin of sacerdotal authority. In many cases, all distinction between laymen and members of the Priesthood, was utterly contemned as a Popish prejudice; and the history of that period accordingly, presents a number of preachers, who, immediately on leaving mechanical employments, assumed the office of Ministers. *Ordination to the Clerical functions fell into entire disuse.* Nothing more was required, but an election or nomination by the parishioners; a certain examination as to morals, and the gift of popular oratory; and a verbal appointment by the presiding Divine to the charge of the congregation." "Imposition of hands," said they, "we judge not to be necessary."

and do as they had done, to discharge all the sacred offices of an ambassador for Christ; and this their commission has descended from generation to generation to the present day. Thus, although the Divine Word assures us, that no man taketh this honour to himself, yet history informs us, that this has been done. All Scripture is opposed to such a course; and although charity induces me to hope for the best, yet a regard for truth compels me to state, that a single text will scarcely be found, to satisfy the inquiring mind of the validity or efficiency of the acts of those who have no regular commission from Christ. It is an error not less dangerous than that which arises from undue interference with either of the other marks of the Church; because, if Christ, represented by His authorized servant, be not in the Church of God, it does not appear how any thing can be done in the great work of our salvation. "Without Me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing." The absence of this mark is so detrimental to the character of the Church, that even the successors of those who despised it, and effaced it from the portion of the Church to which they belonged, not unfrequently shew an anxiety to convince their adherents that it is still to be found among them. But they seem to forget, that this mark can be impressed by no

other hand than the Redeemer's. Like either of the other two, were it lost, no man could restore it. Were the word of God to be lost and forgotten, none among the sons of men could supply the want. In like manner, when the channel is interrupted through which the Divine commission flows, none among the sons of men can renew the commission to act as an ambassador for Christ. It must, then, be a great error to suppose, that men who never received power to transmit this commission, can empower others to act in Christ's stead; and it is not less foolish to suppose, that any length of time, or number of hands through which it passes, can render that commission valid which at first was assumed without the Redeemer's authority. It is God only who can proclaim the glad tidings of pardon and peace to the world, or instruct men how to prepare for heaven. Hence the reason of the Apostle's question, "How can they preach unless they be sent?" Men must be sent, to be in Christ's stead beseeching the children of Adam to be reconciled to God, and exhorting the members of the Christian Church to the practice of every thing pure, lovely, and of good report. They must be sent, to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, in the name of the congregation, and to perform all the other offices, which none but the

great High-Priest of our profession, or His representative, has a right to do. They must be sent, to “set in order the things that are wanting” in the Church, and to “ordain” men for the Ministry^z, and to “command and teach^a” all things tending to the regulation of the household of God. This constantly tends to remind the world of the great merits of the Redeemer, and of the total inability of man, either to obtain instruction in righteousness, or to offer acceptable service, or to promote the great work of salvation, in any degree, but through the power and authority of Him, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and Who alone can bring us into the presence of the Father. It is God only who can instruct men in the great truths of revelation. Hence the Apostle’s question concerning those who prophesy or teach in God’s name, “How can they preach except they be sent^b?” It is God only who can draw men to Him, receive them into covenant with Himself, and bestow upon them the blessings procured by the atonement made for them by the great High-Priest of our profession. Hence the saying of the same Apostle, “No man taketh the honour of the Priesthood unto himself^c.” It is God only who can rule as

^z Tit. i. 5.

^a 1 Tim. iv. 11.

^b Rom. x. 15.

^c Heb. v. 4.

King for ever, and govern all things in His Church. Hence our blessed Lord's revelation, that all power was given to Him, and that He would be with His servants always^d, and thus give efficacy to all that they should do in His name^e. They have therefore erred, who suppose that they have a right to act without a commission handed down from Christ in a visible manner, from age to age, and without interruption from the Apostles, who received the commission from our Lord immediately before His ascension^f.

^d St. Matt. xxviii. 18.

^e St. John xx. 23.

^f In reference to this very subject, it is a remarkable fact, that the celebrated John Calvin has left his most awful curse in such terms as to rest on the heads of the greater part of his disciples. His words are these: "If they would give us such a hierarchy, in which the Bishops have such a pre-eminence, as that they do not refuse to be subject to Christ, and to depend upon Him as their only head, and refer all to Him; then I will confess, that they are worthy of all *curses*, if any such shall be found, who will not reverence it, and submit themselves to it, with the utmost obedience." (De Necessitate Reformandæ Ecclesiæ, p. 60. ed. Amst.) In reference to this dreadful malediction, Dr. Chapman expresses the sentiments of Episcopalians, when he says, "For my own part, strong Episcopalian as I am, let me assure you, that I could not feel myself justified in using this last expression, I could not find in my heart to apply it to our present dissenting brethren; although Calvin, contemplating the very circumstances in which they are now placed, did not hesitate to adopt it." (Vide Sermons on the Ministry, &c. Sermon VII.) "We find," says the Rev. Francis Fulford, "that at Geneva, the seat of Calvin's labours, after a gradual declension of

Q. But do you think it possible, that a poor and erring mortal can in any sense represent the *Divine Presence* in the visible Church?

A. I am told "that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, &c. that no flesh should glory in His presence[§]." And this is truly exemplified in all the marks of the Church. The *Divine will* is made known to the world in a way which man would never in all probability have anticipated; the *Divine assistance* is communicated by such simple means, as sets the wisdom of man completely at nought; and, in like manner, the *Divine Presence* is represented in the Church by ambassadors, who, to human eyes, are wholly unworthy of the honour.

many years, the Church has now, it appears, sunk down to the very lowest standard of doctrine consistent with nominal Christianity. The Trinity, the Atonement, the Incarnation of the Son of God, are, or were lately, absolutely proscribed by authority as topics of preaching in the congregations there considered orthodox. Could such a downfall so easily have taken place, had not the authority of the primitive Church, as a Witness and Interpreter of Holy Writ, been intentionally disparaged from the beginning, and private, that is to say, popular and fashionable judgment, set up instead, for Presbyterian purposes? Episcopal sway, appealing, as it must, to antiquity, was surely just the thing needed to watch and check that evil leaven before it had spread so far." (Introd. to a Course of Plain Serm. pp. 41, 42.)

§ 1 Cor. i. 27.

But it is thus that God proves the faith of His servants; thus that He teaches them not to look to the outward means, but to remember Him alone, who can give efficacy to these means. The wisdom of God is manifest in this. Were the means splendid and noble, as their purpose would warrant, they could not be found in the world; and were they found, the minds of men would rest on the creature, and forget the Creator; the outward elements would usurp the honour due to Him who gives them effect. The language of St. Paul establishes this doctrine: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us^h." I believe, then, that were man glorious as the highest seraph in heaven, he would still be at an infinite distance from dignity adequate to represent the presence of the Infinite and the Eternal. On the other hand, when I recollect that, in the merciful work of human redemption, God graciously condescends to stoop to man, in order that man may eventually be exalted to God; when I remember, that the Son of God was found in the fashion of man, in order that man might be enabled to put on the image of God; I can see nothing inconsistent with the wonderful character of this great scheme, in the appointment of a humble child of sinful Adam as

^h 2 Cor. iv. 7.

the ambassador for Christ. It is a striking proof of the Redeemer's condescension, and fills me with the most pious admiration of the infinite goodness of the Almighty. I humbly acknowledge His right to grant His commission to whomsoever He thinks proper, and I clearly perceive the great wisdom of conferring this honour on man, rather than sending heavenly messengers to fill this truly honourable post. There is thus no risk of mortal eyes being dazzled, nor of that honour being paid to the representative, which is due to Him alone who is represented. Many, forgetting these things, have sadly erred, and because God's ways are not exactly their ways, they have rejected the truths and institutions of religion. But my earnest prayer to God is, that I may always, with the simplicity and docility of a little child, receive with thankfulness the great and holy mysteries connected with the kingdom of God and our Lord, who Himself was pleased to assume the form of a man, and thus conferred on the human race the highest honour.

Q. What you say concerning the marks of the Church, may be very plausible reasoning ; but does the word of truth recognize their importance ?

A. If it did not, they would be of little real moment, how plausible soever in appearance. But the word of God does clearly recognize the importance

of each and all of them.—Respecting the *first*, so many places might be cited in proof of its importance, that I know not well which to select. Our Lord says, “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him; *the word* that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last dayⁱ.” And again, “He that heareth *My word*, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath *everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation^k.” And St. Paul, in writing to Timothy, says, “From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation^l.”—With respect to the *second* mark, enough is said to convince us of its great importance. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says, “By grace are ye saved;” our Lord, in reference to Baptism, assures us, that “except a man be born *of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God^m;” and still more directly, “He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be *saved*, but he that believeth not shall be condemnedⁿ.” And in reference to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, he says, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. *Whoso eateth My*

ⁱ St. John xii. 48.

^k St. John v. 24.

^l 2 Tim. iii. 15.

^m St. John iii. 5.

ⁿ St. Mark xvi. 16.

flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day^o.—With respect to the *third* mark, the language is equally decisive. Our Lord's words are, "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which *seeth* THE SON, and believeth on Him, may have *everlasting life*, and I will raise him up at the last day^p." "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you^q." "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me^r." "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet: verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city^s." "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain,

^o St. John vi. 53.

^p St. John vi. 40.

^q St. John xiv. 18.

^r St. Matt. x. 40.

^s St. Matt. x. 14.

they are retained:—And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world^t." In allusion to these sayings of our Lord, St. Paul thus expresses himself: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, &c. and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God^u." To prevent mistake concerning the authority necessary to act as an ambassador, the Apostle tells us, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that no man taketh the honour of the Priesthood unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron^x. We know also, that the Apostles ordained Elders in every Church^y; and St. Jude tells us of some who perished in the gainsaying of Korah^z, which, without dispute, must refer to such as St. Paul had in view, when he said, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them^a." It is thus obvious, that *eternal life*

^t St. John xx. 21; St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

^u 2 Cor. v. 19.

^x Heb. v. 4.

^y Acts xiv. 23.

^z Jude 11.

^a Rom. xvi. 17.

and happiness are mentioned in connection with each of the marks of the Church, while the severest punishment is denounced against such as either neglect or despise any of them.

Q. But since a regularly authorized Ministry is of such importance, as to form one of the marks of the Church of Christ, is it not singular, that so many professing the Christian religion should consider it as scarcely deserving their regard? .

A. When we consider the small respect which many pay to the other marks of the Church, their conduct in this respect does not appear so very singular. There are thousands among Christians, whose actions betray a very great disregard for the *Divine Word*. There are thousands, whose neglect of the instituted means of grace, but too clearly shews how little they value the *Divine assistance*. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if thousands should also be found, who disregard a regular commission, as the means through which the *Divine Presence* is graciously represented in the Church. It is a melancholy truth, that there is difficulty in determining which of the marks of the Church have been most despised by many who bear the Christian name. When I look at the Christian world, its practice almost compels me to conclude, that there are multitudes professing to be followers of Christ,

who do not revere the *word of God*, nor the *means of grace*, nor the *ambassadors for Christ*, as if eternal life and happiness, through the merits of Christ, depended on the regard which is shewn to these things. Thousands attend to them as far as may be convenient or fashionable, or according to their own notions of right and wrong; and beyond this, they care not to know, nor to do, the will of God.

Q. You have shewn that the Word of God, or what is the same thing, the great Founder and the first builders of the Church, our Lord and His Apostles, recognized the three marks of the Church; did their *immediate successors* consider these marks as of importance?

A. They certainly did. My Christian pastor, on whom I look as my spiritual father, and to whom I repair for advice or instruction in all religious matters concerning which I am in any doubt, told me, that the first Fathers of the Church, who lived in the days of the Apostles, or immediately after them, clearly recognized all the marks of the Church; and he gave me a volume containing selections from the primitive Fathers^b to read, and also the Bishop of Lincoln's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles; but particularly pointed to his remarks on the VIth,

^b Records of the Church.

XXIII^d, and XXVth Articles, from which I could discover the respect paid to the three marks of the Church by the primitive Fathers. Ignatius, who I find is called the friend of St. Peter and St. John, and Bishop of Antioch, writes in his Epistle to the Magnesians, "Study, therefore, to be confirmed in the *doctrines* of the Lord, and of the Apostles, that in all you do, you may be well advanced in flesh and spirit, in faith and love, through the Son, Father, and Spirit, the beginning and the end." And in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he says, "Nevertheless I have heard of some who have gone to you, having *perverse doctrines*, whom ye did not suffer to sow among you." From this and other sayings of the Fathers, I perceive that they recognized the first mark of the Church, viz. the *word of God*^c. Tertullian, who lived in the second century, makes

^c "The Scriptures, which the Apostles acknowledged or delivered, the Churches constantly received for their own direction, and regularly transmitted to their posterity. Upon these Scriptures they grounded their faith: to these Scriptures they still appealed as the foundation of their doctrines: they still condemned all doctrines which were not contained in these Scriptures: and if, at any time, they brought forward human authorities to justify their opinions or expressions, they did so, for the purpose of shewing that they were not chargeable with any innovation in the doctrine, or in the manner of expressing it, still referring for the origin and groundwork of their doctrine, to the testimony of the written word of God." (Mant's Discourses on the Church, &c. Disc. I.)

mention of Baptism, in such a way, that I have no doubt he recognized it as a means of grace: "The power of *baptizing*," says he, "belongs to the High-priest, who is the Bishop; hence it may be exercised by Presbyters and Deacons, but not without the Bishop's authority." And Ignatius, in an Epistle to the Church at Smyrna, speaking of some who held other doctrines than the grace of God, says, "These abstain from the *Sacrament*, and from prayer, because they confess not, that the Sacrament is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let that be esteemed a well-ordered celebration of the Sacrament, which is administered either by the Bishop, or by those to whom he has committed it." And in his Epistle to the Romans, he says, "I long for the bread of God, heavenly bread, bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was of the seed of David in the latter days: and I long for the drink of God, His blood, which is love without conception, and life for evermore." Thus the early Fathers recognized the second mark of the Church, viz. the means of grace, through which the *Divine assistance* is communicated. With regard to the third mark, there are so many things said, that I can only mention one or two of an immense multitude. Clement, whom St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians calls his fellow-labourer, describes the

Christian ministry by an allusion to the Jewish priesthood: "For the chief-priest has his proper services, and to the priests their proper place is appointed, and to the levites belong their proper ministrations, and the layman is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to laymen." I find it mentioned, that the same St. Clement, in another part of his Epistle, says, "Our Apostles knew, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that contention would arise about the name of Episcopacy, for this very reason; therefore, having a perfect foreknowledge of this, they ordained the aforesaid Ministers, and afterwards regulated the manner of succession, that when they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministration." St. Ignatius mentions this matter so often, and in such explicit terms, that there can be nothing more conclusive said on the subject. "Let no man," says he, "do any thing without the Bishop:" "I charge you, that you do all things in a spirit of godly concord; the Bishop holding presidency over you in the place of God: and the Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles: and the Deacons, my well-beloved, entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ. Without these there is no Church." It is needless to mention what is recorded concerning the opinion of other Fathers, respecting this matter; enough has been mentioned

to shew, that the *immediate successors* of the Apostles recognized the third mark of the Church, viz. a regularly *commissioned ministry*.

Q. Have then these notes or marks, always been the distinguishing characteristics of the Church of God?

A. They have. Under the Patriarchal dispensation, the *will of God* was made known by direct communications from on high: sacrifices were appointed from the very earliest times, and the *Divine grace* thus imparted to mortals: and the Angel of the Lord, who by many is supposed to have been our blessed Redeemer, frequently descended from heaven; and thus the *Divine Presence* was manifested to the fathers of the faithful. In the Church, in its typical state, under the Mosaic dispensation, the *statutes and judgments* of the Lord were revealed: Circumcision and the Passover, and offerings for sin and for peace, were instituted as *means of Divine grace*: and the Priesthood, typical of the office of the great High-Priest, was established, and thus secured to the Israelites the promise of the *Divine Presence*^d. Christ being come, an High-Priest of good things to come, the shadow gave place to the Substance^e; a new covenant was made,

^d Exod. xxix. 44, 45.

^e Heb. x. 1.

and the old vanished away^f, yet in such manner, that not one jot or one tittle of the Law was destroyed^g. At this time, the Church exhibited such glory as exceeded her glory during her sojourn in the Temple^h. Her great PROPHET, foretold by Moses, was sojourning in her courts, and Himself—the Way, the Truth, and the Lifeⁱ—teaching her the *will of the Father*: He, whose mitre was engraved with “HOLINESS TO THE LORD^k,” and who is a PRIEST for ever after the order of Melchizedek, was with her to *offer* One sacrifice for sins, by which One offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified^l, and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world^m. To convey to men the benefits of this great sacrifice, He appointed the various *means of grace*, which had been shadowed forth in Circumcision, the Passover, and the daily Sacrifice: He Who is EMMANUEL, even *very God of very God*, was with her as her KING, to give her statutes and judgments which might be for her good always, and to communicate that power and authority to His servants, which would enable them, in all time coming, to bring the nations into subjection to Him, Who is

^f Heb. viii. 13.

^h Hag. ii. 9.

^k Exod. xxviii. 36.

^m 1 John ii. 2.

^g St. Matt. v. 17, 18.

ⁱ St. John xiv. 6.

^l Heb. x. 12, 14.

King of kings and Lord of lords. In the Apostles' day, the Church was distinguished by the self-same marks. "They that gladly received *the Word*, were *baptized*, and continued stedfastly in the *Apostles' doctrine and fellowship*, and in the *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*ⁿ." In this short account of THE CHURCH, there is mention made of *the doctrine*, or THE WORD OF GOD; of *baptism*, *breaking of bread*, and *prayer*, or the MEANS OF GRACE; and of the *fellowship of the Apostles*, or the *Christian Ministry*, connected with which is the DIVINE PRESENCE^o. In times subsequent to the Apostolical age, the notes of the Church have been recorded in her Creeds. "I believe One holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." Here the Church is mentioned as ONE; even that "One body," of which Christ is "the Head^p." It is called HOLY, because it is sanctified by the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, and embraces the One holy faith Once delivered to the saints, that is to say, *the holy Word of God*; and is the receptacle of all the holy Ordinances instituted by Christ. It is called CATHOLIC, because its members throughout the world are all baptized into its faith by One baptism, and have all been made to drink into One Spirit^q; in other words,

ⁿ Acts ii. 41, 42.

^p Col. i. 18.

^o St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

^q 1 Cor. xii. 13.

all its members acknowledging the same Lord, and holding the same faith, are blessed with the same *means of grace*. And it is termed APOSTOLIC, because its members continue stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and its Ministers derive their commission in unbroken succession from those holy men; and thus, according to our Lord's express promise, are blessed with *His Presence*^r, by which, and through which, efficacy is given to His Word, His Sacraments, and the acts of His servants^s. Thus at all times, and in all places, the marks of the Church have been seen in the *doctrine, worship, and fellowship*, of her faithful members; in other words, the true Church has always been known by a *unity of faith, obedience, and charity*, amongst her children, wheresoever her foundations have been laid^t.

Q. How have these marks been transmitted from age to age?

A. The WORD OF GOD was committed to writing by those whose names are attached to its various portions. Every branch of the Church was, in all probability, or rather was without doubt, furnished with a copy of the valuable Record. From this, as

^r St. John xiv. 18, 19.

^s St. John xvii. 20; Acts iii. 12.

^t See this explained at greater length, in three Sermons, entitled "Scottish Episcopacy and Scottish Episcopalians," by the author.

from the mouth of the Lord, the authorized servants of Christ were to learn the doctrine; from this, they were to instruct those that heard them. They were neither to add to the sacred Record, nor to take from it^u; but were to embrace and to teach it, in its true and full meaning, as they themselves had learnt it at the mouth of those, who had been immediately instructed by our Lord and His Holy Spirit. The Word of God has been preserved in the Church from the beginning; being faithfully recorded in various copies, and handed down from generation to generation in its purity and integrity; and being faithfully taught in its true and primitive signification, the holy Book has at last come into our hands, to be passed down to the next generation, and taught in the Church in its fulness and truth, to all who will listen to its gracious message^x. In the sacred Record, the instituted MEANS OF GRACE are expressly mentioned, so that at all times they may be duly and properly dispensed in the Church. To the stewards of God's mysteries was entrusted the important charge of giving to the members of His household, their meat in due season. The blessed Apostles, taught by Christ, and guided by His Holy Spirit, were enabled to discharge this important duty with fidelity, and to leave full informa-

^u Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

^x St. Mark xvi. 15.

tion concerning its due discharge from age to age. From them, their immediate successors thus received correct knowledge of the *means of grace*, and of the *manner* in which they were to be administered. They again instructed others in regard to these things, and left on record documents, which both prove their adherence to the Apostolical doctrine and rule, and enable those who come after to detect innovations and guard against omissions. Thus from age to age, the means of grace, appointed by our blessed Lord and mentioned in the Divine Record, have been known; and thus also, the true mode of administering them has been preserved. At this very day, therefore, the stewards of the mysteries of God, know how to give food proper for the nourishment of spiritual life, and are able to teach their successors how to do the same thing.—The COMMISSION OF CHRIST, first given to the Apostles, empowered them to send others, even as Christ had power from the Father to send them^y. The Apostles exercised this power^z, and transmitted the authority, which they themselves had received, to others, in order to be handed down by them in their turn^a; and thus from age to age, the Commission of Christ has descended; first, through the Apostles, and ever

^y St. John xx. 21.

^z Acts xiv. 23; vi. 6.

^a Tit. i. 5.

since, where the Apostolic rule has been observed, through the highest order of Ministers in the Church, till, at last, it is held by the present Bishops throughout the world, who have been regularly ordained to their high and holy office^b.

Q. How many orders of Ministers are there in the Christian Church?

A. From its first establishment to the present day, there have been three distinct orders in the Priesthood.

^b No one who believes that a commission derived from Christ, is necessary to authorize a man to act as an ambassador for the Redeemer, will suppose that a mere layman could give such commission. It is necessary that he who gives it, have himself received authority to transmit it to others. But for 1500 years, neither layman, deacon, nor presbyter, ever received such authority, nor pretended to such a thing. It is therefore obvious, that no layman, deacon, or presbyter, could take upon himself the power of granting a power which he had never received any authority to grant. Those who argue that, in the Apostolic age, Presbyters had a right to ordain, appear to forget that, even on the supposition that their assertion is true, this right could not be laid down and taken up again at pleasure. The commission must descend in an unbroken line. But the line, in the case of Presbyters, is beyond all dispute wanting for fifteen centuries; during this long period, no Presbyter in the Church was commissioned to ordain another to succeed him in his sacred office. In this respect, the Presbyter stood on the same grounds as the layman. Were Bishops to neglect, for a single generation, to transmit the commission of Christ, there is not a power on earth which could restore the authority. When Presbyters began to ordain, they assumed a power with which they were not entrusted: laymen were in the same situation.

Q. What have these been named ?

A. During our Lord's stay on earth, He was the great High-Priest. He alone had an inherent right to act in this capacity. He alone could offer sacrifices for sin, and make reconciliation for man. He alone had power to grant a commission. All others, whether before or since our Lord's incarnation, are merely His humble representatives, acting in His name, and by His authority. This our great *High-Priest*, had under Him twelve *Apostles*, and seventy *Disciples*. During the Apostles' days, the highest order consisted of the *Apostles*; the second order, of those called *Bishops*, *Elders*, or *Presbyters*; and the third, of those styled *Deacons*. From the Apostles' time to the present, the highest order has been named *Bishops*, *Archbishops*, *Patriarchs*; the second order has been denominated *Presbyters*, *Priests*, or *Elders*; and the third has always been named *Deacons*. But it is not by *names*, but by *offices*, that the orders of the Christian Priesthood are best distinguished. A name is nothing; it is the authority and office which distinguish the order. Even before the Christian era, the Church of God was distinguished by a threefold order of Priesthood; and so as a shadow exhibited exactly what we now see in substance. By Divine appointment, Aaron had under him Priests and

Levites; and when Christ came, there was made a change of the Priesthood: it was no longer confined to the house of Aaron, nor to the tribe of Levi. Christ, the true High-Priest, even the Lion of the tribe of Judah, became the Priest of the Most High God, and admitted the Gentile as well as the Jew into the courts of His Church. But the type which had been shewn on the mount, was not to be without its antitype. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and so is His holy Church. The *highest* order, holds Christ's commission to act in His stead, and to employ others, and give them authority to act as its assistants. The *second* order has the cure of a congregation of Christians committed to his charge by his Bishop, who is in a peculiar manner the Pastor of the Diocese—even as the twelve Apostles were appointed by our blessed Lord, who is the great Bishop of souls—to assist him in his work and labour of love, and report unto him their success. The *third* order is ordained to assist the Bishop, or the Priest, in the discharge of various sacred offices, and to attend to the necessities of the sick and the poor.—Thus the *three offices* have ever been distinct. To the highest order, belongs not only the office of preaching and baptizing, authoritatively pronouncing God's pardon to faithful penitents, administering the Holy

Communion, and attending to the necessities of the sick ; but also the *peculiar* office of the ordaining of Christian Ministers^c, the confirming of baptized persons^d, and the jurisdiction or government of the Church^e. To the second order, as Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord, it belongs “to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for, the Lord’s family; to seek for Christ’s sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever^f ;” or, more particularly, it belongs to them to proclaim to the penitent the forgiveness of sins, through our Lord Jesus Christ^g; to dispense the Word of God, and His holy Sacraments; and to minister, in all things, as faithful servants of God in the congregations severally committed to their charge; and, when present, they are commonly requested to lay on hands along with the Bishop, in the ordaining of Presbyters^h. The office of the third order, is distinct from both these. “It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth in the Holy Communion, and to help

^c Tit. i. 5.

^e 1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 2.

^g St. Matt. x. 7, &c.

^d Acts viii. 14; xix. 6.

^f Vide Ordinal.

^h 1 Tim. iv. 14.

him in the distribution thereof; and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants; and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop: and, furthermore, it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, and to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation, they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or othersⁱ." This order of things continued without the least interruption till the middle of the sixteenth century, when many, as I have already mentioned, took upon themselves a commission to act. But in the Episcopal Church, the commission of Christ continued to be transmitted with religious exactness, through the hands of the highest order of the Priesthood. The language of the Church, in regard to this important matter, is very remarkable. "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that, from the Apostles' time, there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except

ⁱ Vide Ordinal.

he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority^k." So carefully has this been attended to in the Church of Christ in all ages, that the judicious Hooker, addressing those who had departed from this method, said, "We require you to find out but one Church upon the face of the whole earth, that hath been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by Episcopal regimen, since the time that the blessed Apostles were here conversant;" but to this day, they have not been able to find out a single instance in favour of their polity^l.

^k Vide Preface to the Ordinal.

^l It is a strange fact, that none give more explicit or more decided testimony concerning this matter, than the better informed and more candid among the Presbyterians themselves. Not to mention Calvin, whose sentiments in favour of Episcopacy are well known, the language of Mr. Le Clerc, an eminent divine of the *Presbyterian Church* of Holland, would be considered strong, even in the mouth of an Episcopalian. "I have always," says he, "professed to believe, that Episcopacy is of Apostolical institution, and consequently very good and very lawful; that man had no manner of right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that had crept into Christianity; that it was justly preserved in England, where the Reformation was practicable without altering it; that, therefore, the Protestants in England, and *other places where there are Bishops*, do very ill to

Q. Do the sacred Scriptures give us reason to conclude, that the Ministers of Christ were originally appointed to the various grades of the Priesthood by distinct ordinations, as is the case at the present day?

A. The present practice of the Church is sufficiently authorized by her blessed Master's example, an example which constitutes her rule in all things. On turning to the *third* chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark, or the parallel passage in the *sixth* chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, it will be found recorded, that our Lord *chose* twelve of His disciples, named them apostles, and ordained them, "that they *should be with Him*, and that He *might send them forth* to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." This was their *first* ordination. After some considerable interval, He invested them with the authority for which their former ordination was to prepare them.

separate from that discipline; that they would still do much worse in attempting to destroy it, in order to *set up Presbytery*, fanaticism, and anarchy. Things ought not to be turned into a chaos, nor people seen every where, without a call and without learning, pretending to inspiration. Nothing is more proper to prevent them, than the Episcopal discipline, as by law established in England, especially when those that preside in Church government, are persons of penetration, sobriety, and discretion." Vide Bp. of Lincoln's Exp. of Thirty-nine Art. No. xxiii. See also "Apology, &c." by Tho. S. Brittan.

The account of this transaction, is in very different terms from those already mentioned. This account will be found in the *sixth* chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, and in the *ninth* of St. Luke's. "He *gave* them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases; and He *sent* them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." And He *charged* them concerning their conduct, and the exercise of their ministry. This was their *second* ordination. It was soon after this, that our Lord appointed the seventy disciples, whom He sent forth two and two before His face, into every city and place whither He Himself would come.—The *third* ordination of the Apostles, when they were invested with all power and authority to act in Christ's stead, and to bind and loose in His Church, took place after our blessed Lord's resurrection, and immediately before His ascension. The account of this ordination, is recorded by St. Matthew in the *twenty-eighth* chapter, by St. Mark in the *sixteenth* chapter, and by St. John in the *twentieth* chapter. The terms in which this commission was granted, are most remarkable. "*All power* is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. *Go ye*, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things,

whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, *I am with you alway*, even unto the end of the world. Peace be unto you: *As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*: and when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*^m." From this time forth, the Apostles claimed to be ambassadors for Christ, and acted with authority in His name. St. Paul obviously alludes to this gradual promotion in the Priesthood, when he says, "They that have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degreeⁿ." The scriptural authority for the practice of the Church, is full and decisive.

Q. But does not personal holiness supersede the necessity of regular ordination?

A. Without personal holiness, no man can be a fit candidate for the holy Ministry. But holiness of character and holiness of office, are things separate and distinct; and that the former is not sufficient qualification for the assumption of the latter, is very obvious. For our Blessed Lord, who received of

^m Vide "The Apostolic Office;" a very valuable discourse, by the Right Rev. Alex. V. Griswold, Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, U. S., republished in this country by T. B. Stephen, Edinb.

ⁿ 1 Tim. iii. 13.

the Holy Spirit without measure, and whose life was without the shadow of blemish, "glorified not Himself to be made an High-priest^o;" but waited until He received a commission from His heavenly Father, before He began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. This alone, is amply sufficient to determine the question; but the case may be strengthened by other scriptural examples. The seven Deacons were men full of the Holy Ghost^p, yet they did not assume the sacred office, until the Apostles had prayed and laid their hands on them. Korah and his company usurped the sacred office, solely on the plea of holiness. "All the congregation are *holy*," said they: yet the signal punishment which overtook those men, is sufficient, one would suppose, to set aside for ever the opinion, that the plea of personal holiness can be sustained as a title to assume the sacred office. Saul took upon himself the sacred office, and forced himself^q, piously, as he no doubt thought, to offer sacrifice; but he thought foolishly, and lost his kingdom as a punishment for his daring conduct. Uzzah, with pious intention, put forth his hand to save the Ark^r; but he was immediately struck dead, as a warning to future generations not to meddle with sacred things, without a Divine com-

^o Heb. v. 5.

^p Acts vi. 3.

^q 1 Sam. xiii. 12.

^r 2 Sam. vi. 6.

mission to do so, conveyed in an open and obvious way.—The case of king Uzziah is equally instructive, and equally awful as a warning to mortals; and clearly shews, that no man may venture with impunity to take the honour of the Priesthood unto himself.—Under the Gospel, the history of the sons of Sceva, the Jew^s, contains a lesson sufficient to instruct us, that the acts of unauthorized individuals, who venture to speak in the name of Christ, will not, as far as we know, be recognized by Him, who is Head over all things in His Church. Every humble Christian reveres these passages of the sacred Record, and wonders that there should be any who disregard them. They are written for our learning, and as all that is necessary to be known concerning the religion and Church of God has been fully revealed, the arm of the Lord is no longer made bare against transgressors; yet they who see and yet will not perceive, and who hear and yet will not understand, have great cause to dread the day when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed. Our Lord's words concerning such are too remarkable to escape observation; "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works;

* Acts xix. 14, &c.

and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity†." By their works, our Lord assures us, we shall know them. They may call themselves holy, for we are told that they shall appear in sheep's clothing; that is, they shall appear to men to belong to Christ's flock, and may, personally, be men of great piety and holiness: they may prophesy: they may do many wonderful works: they may almost deceive the very elect: still by their fruits they may be known. The Prophets of the Lord are as one man, in regard to all the fundamental principles of Christ's holy Church, and keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," by reverencing all the *marks* by which the Church has ever been distinguished: whilst they who separate themselves, and believe themselves to be men of holy character, and so run without being sent, are divided, some holding one doctrine, and some another; and one party disregarding one mark of the Church, and another party disregarding another. They want *a principle* of action, and are guided, in a great measure, by convenience or interest, passion or prejudice; and hence they are scarcely agreed on any one point of faith or practice among themselves: and instead of being solicitous, that there be no schism in the body,

† St. Matt. vii. 22.

their strange delight often appears to be, to multiply sects, and form themselves into hostile parties, and so to promote "envying, and strife, and divisions." "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Q. But when the world is lying in wickedness, may not an *inward call* justify the assumption of the Ministerial office, without the outward form of Ordination?

A. An *inward call*, that is, a pious disposition and earnest wish to set forth the glory of God, and promote the good of mankind, and a corresponding wish to dedicate every talent to the service of these works and labours of love, is certainly requisite; and none is admitted into the Ministry, until inquiry has been made, whether the candidate be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon him this office and ministration^u; but this is only a *qualification* for the sacred office, and not a *commission* to undertake it. The world lay in darkness for thousands of years, yet the Redeemer did not come till the fulness of time; and when He did come, He did not rush into the Ministry in order to convert men. It surely will not be disputed, that our blessed Lord's only desire and sole aim, must have been to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind, and that He alone had an

^u Vide Ordinal.

inherent right to call on men to repent and be saved; yet He waited until He was thirty years of age^x, and until He was openly commissioned by a voice from heaven, which declared Him to be THE SON OF GOD. No stronger evidence than this can be adduced, to prove that an inward call, or desire to do good, is not sufficient to justify an assumption of the sacred office^y. Even when the fields were ripe to harvest, and the labourers were few, our blessed Lord did not advise His disciples to run unsent, but told them to pray the Lord of the harvest, that HE would *send forth* labourers into His harvest^z. It is a remarkable fact, that the only Prophets of whom we read that rushed into this high office, were not sent of God. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied^a:" and it is certainly not less remarkable, that the Israelites were almost unanimous in applauding these over-zealous and rash men; for in reference to this very circumstance, our Lord thus teaches His disciples; "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the *false* prophets^b." A

^x St. Luke iii. 23.

^y Vide Brett's "Divine Right,"

and Bp. Mant's "Church and her Ministrations."

^z St. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

^a Jer. xxiii. 21.

^b St. Luke vi. 26.

single instance cannot be cited from the sacred volume, to give countenance to the opinion, that an inward call is all that is necessary, or that it is sufficient, even on what may appear to men to be "extraordinary occasions." God, in His own good time, will send help to those who have full faith in His providence, and in the sufficiency of the means which He has appointed; and it is impious to run, where—with humility be it spoken—the Son of God would have waited His heavenly Father's time. In the Jewish Church, the Ministers of religion were appointed to their office by being anointed, consecrated, invested, and separated^c. In our Lord's day, those who assisted Him in laying the foundations of His holy Church, on the ground which had been marked out from the beginning, were regularly called, and commissioned, and sent forth. In the Apostolical age, the sacred offices were filled, not by men who rushed into them without a regular commission, but by men on whom the Apostles, solemnly and with prayer, laid their hands. So has it been in every age: an outward and visible commission has been held to be indispensable to all who honour the Lord, and are guided by the page of Revelation, and follow the footsteps of the Fathers.

^c Exod. xl. 12: Lev. viii. 1, &c.

Q. You spoke of "the Church of God before the Christian era;" Do you mean to say, that our blessed Lord did not destroy the Jewish, when He established the Christian Church?

A. In one sense, I certainly mean to say so. The Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world, and the "Church of God" has been since the beginning. The Gospel was preached to our first parents, and the Redeemer was promised. In anticipation of what He was to accomplish, when the fulness of time was come, the Church of God was established in the world. Men were invited into its communion, on account of the Redeemer's merits; and we trace its existence in the time of Adam, and again in the age of Noah.—Abraham, by a typical representation, was made acquainted with the plan of human redemption, and he had full confidence in its sufficiency. He saw the Lord's day, and was glad. The covenant which God condescended to make with the father of the faithful, shadowed forth both the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel.—Under the Mosaic dispensation, the statutes and judgments, the ceremonies and sacrifices, which were revealed and instituted, all pointed to the fuller and more perfect system, which was to be established by Christ.—At the Christian era, there was, therefore, no *new* Church instituted: that which had

been from the beginning was merely made complete : the Church of God, which, in all previous dispensations, had been shadowed forth, was only then established in its true and proper character.

Q. Of whom, then, does the Church of Christ consist ?

A. The Church, in the most extensive meaning of the term, consists of those whose names are written in heaven—an innumerable company of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect^d. But, in the mean time, it may be said to comprehend three grand divisions: 1. The angels and hosts of God that surround the throne, and behold the face of the Father: 2. Those who, having finished their course, do rest from their labours^e, and wait in full expectation of that “crown of righteousness, which is laid up, and which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them^f at that day,” when He appears again^g: and, 3. Those who have been duly baptized into the family of God, and are yet in a state of trial and probation. Of the first two divisions, I need say nothing more: of the third, or visible portion of the Church, I may say, in the words of the Article, that it “is a congregation of faithful

^d Heb. xii. 22, 23.

^e Acts ii. 34.

^f St. Matt. xxv. 31, &c.

^g 2 Tim. iv. 8.

men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same^h." Hence the Church militant consists of all who, believing with the heart and making confession with the mouthⁱ, have been duly baptized into the body of Christ^k. The Church militant does not therefore consist, as some pretend, of those only who keep the faith, and do not defile their garments, but of all who have been regularly baptized, and have not been cut off, nor have separated themselves^l. Our blessed Lord compares His Church to a field, in which there are tares as well as wheat; and to a net, in which there are both good and bad fishes. In its triumphant state, the Church will be composed only of the good: in its militant state, it may contain many who call Jesus LORD, but who shall never enter into the kingdom of the Father^m. In reference to the Church, I find, that when Peter made the declaration, "Thou art Christ;" our blessed Lord immediately replied, "Upon this Rockⁿ"—that is, upon the Rock which is Christ^o—"I will build My Church, and the gates of

^h Art. XIX.

^k St. Mark xvi. 16.

^m St. Matt. vii. 21.

^o 1 Cor. iii. 11.

ⁱ Rom. x. 9, 10.

^l St. Jude 18, 19.

ⁿ St. Matt. xvi. 18.

hell shall not prevail against it." There will always be some, who will abide stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers. Thus, our blessed Lord is the Rock of Ages, on which the Church is built. The foundation-stones are the Apostles and Prophets^p: the courses already built, are the generations which rest from their labours: and the holy edifice is still going on; for of the members of the Church it is said, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house^q." Hence also the language of St. Paul, "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit^r." For the edifying of this body, or Church of Christ, the Ministers of Christ, as St. Paul assures us, are given^s. It is by Christ's Ministers, that men, acknowledging One Lord, and professing One faith, are admitted, by One baptism, into that One body of Christ, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ^t." Thus from the time at which the promise

^p Eph. ii. 20.

^q 1 Pet. ii. 5.

^r Eph. ii. 21, 22.

^s Eph. ii. 11, 12.

^t Eph. ii. 4, 5, 13.

was made to Eve, till the second coming of Christ, the Church militant, in every succeeding age, includes all who are taken out of the dark and outer state of the world, and sacramentally admitted into the family of God, where they may learn the *Divine will*, be strengthened by the *Divine grace*, and blessed with the *Divine Presence*. It is in the Church militant, where men's fidelity is tried, and where habits of entire submission to the Divine will are fostered and confirmed. The whole family of Adam are invited to come, and be received into this state of salvation^u; and although many do not avail themselves of the gracious invitation; although many, who are admitted into this holy family, may prove disobedient children, and act the part of the prodigal son; yet, having once been admitted into covenant with God in Baptism, every member of the Church is permitted to call God his Father; and even if disobedient, and a wanderer from his Father's house, any one, on coming to himself, is permitted to return, and encouraged to hope for a gracious reception.

Q. You say in the Creed, that you believe *the Holy Catholic Church*; Does not this mean the Church of Rome?

A. By no means. The members of the Romish

^u St. Matt. xi. 28.

Church call themselves Catholics, but they have no title to the term in an exclusive sense. The Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, is that society throughout the whole world, which continues "steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers." In other words, the Catholic Church has been, is, and ever will be, distinguished by the infallible marks of truth, which were impressed on its front by the finger of the Son of God. The Roman Church is only a part of the Catholic Church of Christ, and, by no means, a pure part: for, in it, more than one of the marks of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church have been sadly defaced. The Protestant Episcopal Church is a portion of the Catholic Church of Christ, and a very pure portion, having, with great fidelity and care, cleansed itself of many errors in doctrine and practice, which had crept in during the lapse of ages. This portion of the Church returned to its first love, by studying the inspired writings, and the early records of the Church, and adopting as its own the principles of the earliest and purest ages. The Romanists in this country, are merely a sect, and, what it pains one to mention, a sect in a state of schism from the true Catholic branch of the Church in the land. This is matter of deep regret to all who would wish to see the breaches of the

Church not widened but healed: it is also matter of no small surprise to all who are aware of the learning of many among the Romanists, and the respect which they affect to pay to Ecclesiastical order, and entire unity among all who profess to be followers of Christ. Such, however, is the sad result of error, in regard to any leading principle. The Romanists, by attempting to preserve unity in their own way, rather than in God's way, are compelled to follow a course, at utter variance in practice with their avowed respect for the principle of unity. But this remarkable trait in the history of the Romanists, ought to be a warning to true Catholics, to be careful above all things lest, in regard to any fundamental principle, they fall into error. The most grievous schisms have been the inevitable consequence of making the Pope, instead of Christ, the centre of Catholic unity.—When I hear any in this country, who call themselves of the Church of Rome, assume the title of Catholic, I object, and remind such, that even in Rome they would have no *exclusive* right to the title. Even in such case, they would be only on a par with members of the Eastern Church in Greece, Russia, or Abyssinia, or of the Syrian Church in Malabar; whilst, in this country, they can be considered only as sectarists, maintaining a needless and sinful separation from a pure branch

of the Catholic Church of Christ^x. When asked, therefore, if I am a member of the Catholic Church? I reply that I am. I am a member of the Protestant branch of the Catholic Church; a portion of the Church, Evangelical in its doctrines, Scriptural in its sacraments, and Apostolical in its constitution. Thus, "I believe the Holy Catholic Church," and esteem it my highest privilege to be a member of its communion in its pure and primitive character.

Q. I think I comprehend your meaning; but as it is of importance to have a distinct and definite idea of what is implied by the term *Catholic*, will you state in few words, and in direct terms, what you understand by the *Catholic Church*?

A. I have already stated, that by the *Catholic Church*, I mean that "One body," or society, which is animated by "One spirit" of holy love and obedience, and into which we "are called in One hope" of being therein trained up and prepared for the reward of eternal life; and that the members of this holy society, or family, all acknowledge "One Lord," even our Lord Jesus Christ; and hold the "One faith," Once delivered to the saints, and were admitted into communion by "One baptism," instituted by our Lord "for the remission of sins;" and,

^x Vide Dr. Hook's celebrated Sermon, "Hear the Church," preached before the Queen.

hence, that they are all bound, by the most solemn engagement, to worship, adore, and obey, "One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all^y." I have further stated, that this Church, which is the body of Christ, and of which He is the ever-glorious Head, is edified by those whom Christ gave or commissioned for that purpose: for we are distinctly told, that "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ^z," "God hath set some in the Church; first, Apostles; secondly, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers^a."—Thus, the Holy *Catholic Church*, is that body, or society, which, from the beginning, has been distinguished by the *three marks* so often mentioned. It must ever hold the "One faith," which is embodied in *the revealed word of God*; ever dispense *the means of grace*, which our blessed Lord instituted; and ever be edified according to the plan, and by the persons, appointed by its divine Founder, and with whom *He has promised to be present*, even unto the end of the world. The least change in any of these great and leading marks, thus divinely impressed, is injurious to the character and very essence of the Catholic Church. Nothing must be added; nothing taken

^y Eph. iv. 4, &c.

^z Eph. iv. 11, 12.

^a 1 Cor. xii. 28.

away. In the subordinate details, or means, by which the great designs of the Gospel are carried into effect, there may be a certain latitude allowed. Every branch of "the Church, hath power to decree rites and ceremonies," if not "contrary to God's word written^b;" but in things essential, that is, in doctrines, ordinances, and constitution, there can be no change: no alterations nor additions: nothing to-day that was not yesterday: nothing to-morrow that is not to-day.—We find that, even in the Apostles' day, errors in doctrine and in practice were beginning to appear, and that an influx in both respects was predicted. This took place. For some ages, the Church was able to maintain her full right to her Catholic character; for whensoever error appeared within her pale, she adopted measures to purify herself, to expel the danger, and to regain her holy Catholic character.—In the course of a few centuries, the Church, from various causes, became less powerful, or less inclined, to repel error; and innovation upon innovation crept in, till her holy Apostolical character was much stained, and her claim to Catholicity proportionably forfeited.—At the era of the Reformation, the Western Church may be considered as subdivided into three great portions. One of these still retained both power and energy

^b Article XX.

to combat error and expel it; and by this means, it recovered its primitive, holy Catholic and Apostolical character. Such was the Church of England.—The next grand division, was too weak to enter into resolute contest with error. The friends of the novelties of the middle ages, were more powerful than the friends of pure and primitive truth. Like a woman, who, forsaking the guide of her youth, and abandoning herself to every sort of wickedness, loses all that modesty which may have distinguished her in her virgin purity, and even glories in her shame, and rejoices in her baseness; so the division of the Church, of which I am now speaking, although at one time “full of goodness^c,” yet, at last, became so deeply polluted, as to be no longer affected with a sense of shame, nor a desire of amendment. Hence, instead of attempting to correct what was wrong, this division of the Church met in Council, sanctioned error by authority, introduced new and strange doctrines into its creed, and, by so doing, cut itself off from all just title to be any longer considered a sound branch of the Holy *Catholic* Church of Christ. They, who adhere to this fallen portion of the Church, may still lay claim to the title; but they have no better right to it, than any heretical sect of early date, that attempted to

^c Rom. xv. 14.

mingle error with truth, and, at the same time, was anxious to be esteemed a portion of the Church Catholic, which, whilst it maintained its errors, it could not possibly be. — The third division at the Reformation, had the power to combat and throw off the errors of former times; but by using this power without control, they who belonged to this division, took a false step at the very outset, which instantly proved fatal to their claim, to be any longer considered a portion of the Catholic Church. The path of truth is narrow; and it is equally possible to leave it, by adding to what is revealed, and by taking away from it. Those, of whom I am speaking, hurried to such an extreme length, that, with the errors of the middle ages, they rejected great part of Apostolical and Catholic truth, and thus effectually destroyed their title to be ranked with those who “continue stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” The result is remarkable. Instead of abiding in the “One body,” and embracing the “One faith” of primitive times; instead of being as one man in Christian love and holy obedience; instead of exhibiting in their conduct those graces, which the Apostle mentions as the fruits of the Spirit; viz. “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness;” the successors of the men, who run such a headlong course, are

divided and subdivided into sects and parties almost without number; they have adopted systems of faith and modes of worship, in endless variety; and, what can be mentioned only with sorrow, "there is among them, envying, and strife, and divisions;" in consequence of which, our most holy faith is often sadly degraded in the eyes of the infidel and the heathen. To sum up all, they no longer acknowledge the ancient boundary of the Catholic Church, but extend it, so as to comprehend all sects and parties, how opposite soever their principles and practices may be; or, at all events, each party extends the boundary of the Church so as to embrace itself; and thus it may be said, that in the eyes of these men, the ancient land-marks of the Christian Church, are trifles undeserving of the least regard.—In few words, then, the Catholic Church, like its divine Founder, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Its foundation is Christ, the Rock of Ages; and its chief corner-stone is Christ, the rejected of men, but the chosen of the Father. Its faith is laid in the everlasting word of God: its ordinances derive their efficacy from His appointment, and His blessing: and its builders are His commissioned servants, who act according to His directions, and by His authority. No change can be admitted into its design: no substitution of human devices, in place of the divinely-

appointed pattern. From the beginning to the end; from the preaching of the Gospel to Adam to its announcement to the latest generation; the Holy Catholic Church has been, is, and will be the place, where the doctrines, the ordinances, and the servants of the Lord, are to be found; and the least interference with the character and authority of any one of these, must ever have an immediate and direct tendency to destroy the Catholicity of the portion of the Church which dares so to interfere. But, as in former times, so there are still, within that portion of the Church which successfully combatted error, some who are constantly employed in attempts either to add to, or to take from, those eternal truths and ordinances, on which the character of the Catholic Church depends. This will always be the case whilst the carnal mind is at enmity against God. The Church is, in some instances, able to restrain such rebellious or treacherous members; in others, she is forced to expel them; or rather, now-a-days, to allow them to expel themselves from her communion. Still has she to prove herself the Witness for the truth, amid many trials and temptations. She has ever to be on her guard against avowed enemies and pretended friends. Her history, in former times, affords the strongest evidence of the necessity of strictly examining the

sacred Record, and also of investigating every accessible source of Ecclesiastical knowledge, in order to ascertain what was believed and practised by the Apostles and their more immediate disciples. By this, without addition or diminution, change or fancied improvement, the Church is to abide. Thus, and only thus, can she maintain her *Catholic* character: for be the innovation early or late; by a private individual or a General Council; through the authority of men high in power, or the influence of a party laying claim to more than ordinary piety; it is equally to be condemned—rejected—abjured.

Q. What do you mean by *PROTESTANT Episcopal Church*?

A. During the lapse of ages, when the means of preserving a knowledge of the truth were not so ample as they afterwards became, many errors, both in doctrine and in practice, crept into the Church; so much was this the case, that *the Word of God* could scarcely be said to be any longer the rule of duty, for to the majority of Christians it was unknown; and *the Sacraments*, as originally instituted, were not dispensed; and many practices, having little tendency to make men good, and to prepare them for heaven, were introduced; while others, positively calculated to dishonour God, and fix the darkest stain on religion, were encouraged. At

length the regularly authorized Ministers, viz. the Bishops, and their Presbyters and Deacons, having obtained the sanction and assistance of the civil authorities in England, restored the Church to her primitive purity. They *protested* against the errors which had crept in; and, as the Pope of Rome would not go hand in hand with them in this good work, they *protested* against his authority. Hence the Church, when thus *reformed* from error, got the name of the Protestant Church. It is called Episcopal, because it is still under Episcopal government, such as was instituted by Christ, and established by His Apostles. The Protestant Bishops, in the accomplishment of their purpose, took the word of God as their only rule, and investigated the practices of the purest ages as their only example; and so rejected every doctrine and practice not well authorized, but retained every thing which could claim the sanction of our Lord and His Apostles. Hence, the Protestant Episcopal Church, by returning to primitive purity, is truly Apostolical in all her doctrines and practices, and, as far as any portion of the Christian Church reveres the *marks* of the true Apostolic and Catholic Church, so far does the Protestant Episcopal Church agree with it, and no farther^d.

^d The Church of England and Ireland, at home and in the colonies, the Episcopal Church in Scotland and in America, are

Q. Does the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Scotland possess these three marks?

A. Yes! In her sixth Article she expressly declares the Holy Scriptures, rightly interpreted, to be her

branches of the Holy Catholic Church, reformed from the errors of the middle ages. They all equally maintain the doctrines and practices which in primitive times were considered Catholic verities, and protest against the errors of Popery, and the authority of any foreign Prelate, Potentate, or Power, that would curtail the liberty with which Christ has made them free. In *character* they are CATHOLIC; in *position* they are PROTESTANT. The former title is applied *positively*; the latter *negatively*. The one denotes what they are; the other intimates what they are not. The former declares that they receive and maintain all Catholic verities; the latter, that they repudiate and drive away all strange doctrines. As Catholic, they revere what was *first*, both in doctrine and in practice; as Protestant, they reject what is *subsequent*, from what quarter soever it may come. (Vide note to Dr. Hook's Sermon, "A Call to Union," p. 21—26.) Were the Bishops and Clergy of the Romish Church, to restore the word of God as the only rule of faith, and to administer the Sacraments as originally instituted, and to return to the pure and primitive doctrines and practices of the Apostolic age, that portion of the Church of Christ would be in full communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church; for it maintains the *third mark* of the Church, viz. a regularly commissioned Ministry. In like manner, were the Presbyterians, Independents, &c. humbly to acknowledge their inability to do any thing in forwarding the great work of human salvation, independent of the Redeemer; and hence, were their Ministers no longer to act on their own authority, but to receive a commission regularly and visibly derived from Christ, through their hands who have succeeded the Apostles as governors under Christ in the Church, they would once more be in full communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church; for, in most cases, they would have no great objection to recognize the other two

only rule of faith; and it is obvious to every one of her members, that she constantly reads them in the ears of all her adherents. In like manner, she receives the two sacraments, of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, as the principal means of grace, generally necessary to salvation. In her offices for the Ordination of Ministers, and by her uniform practice, she proves that she recognizes no commission as the Commission of Christ, which has not descended through an uninterrupted channel,

marks of the universal Church of Christ, viz. the Word of God, as the only rule of faith, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, as the means whereby spiritual life is "generally" begun and supported in the soul. It is indeed strange—passing strange—that any sincere Christian should refuse to unite in full communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose terms of communion are summed up in these three short sentences: 1. The revealed Word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and in its true and Catholic sense, is the only rule of faith and practice. 2. The Sacraments, clearly recognized in the revealed Word, are those only which are generally necessary to salvation. 3. The Commission of Christ, regularly transmitted through their hands, whom HE authorized to hand it down, is absolutely necessary to enable a poor and fallen mortal to act as an ambassador for Christ. Can there be any thing in this, which one, sincerely disposed to honour God and our Lord Jesus Christ, must refuse to acknowledge? If not, then his separation from the Protestant Episcopal Church, as a branch of the Holy Catholic Church, is without reason, and without cause; and whatever of sin there may be in keeping up needless division in the Church of God, the guilt can scarcely be removed from his door, who knows these things and acts in opposition to them.

by means of the highest order in the Christian Priesthood. "For," says she, "it is evident unto all men, diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been these three orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." Were the Episcopal Church deficient in any of the marks of a true Church, she could neither be pure nor efficient. 1. Without the word of God, her members could not be brought up as children of God, nor prepared for the kingdom of heaven: 2. Without the instituted means of grace, spiritual life could neither be begun nor supported: and, 3. Without an authorized Ministry, there would be no one to act in Christ's stead, and bring men near to God.

Q. What, then, is the great and distinguishing characteristic of the Church of Christ?

A. UNITY. Her heavenly Master exhorted His followers to be *One* in spirit and in obedience^e. He prayed earnestly to His Father, that this might be the distinguishing mark of His followers^f: and daring must the man be, who would deny that His petition was granted. He indeed told us, that men, calling themselves by His name, would appear, who would break this unity, but of such He bids us

^e St. John xv. 10, &c.

^f St. John xvii. 21.

beware^g. But His prayer was heard, His petition was granted; and in all times and in all places, His faithful disciples have maintained the strictest unity in His holy Church^h. It is to be carefully kept in mind, however, that this *unity* does not include *identity of opinion* in regard to minor points of detail; but *identity of principle*, in regard to all the leading doctrines and institutions of the Gospel. The Apostles and their companions continued with one accord, and glorified God with one mouth. They also laid such strict injunctions on their converts, concerning the preservation of unity in the Church, that none can easily mistake their meaning. Hear with what earnestness St. Paul addresses his converts at Corinth: "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgmentⁱ." Hear also, in what terms he addresses the disciples at Philippi: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel^k."

^g St. Matt. xxiv. 23, &c.

^h Vide Vincentius Lirinensis.

ⁱ 1 Cor. i. 10.

^k Phil. i. 27.

Thus instructed by our blessed Lord and His holy Apostles, the faithful members of the Church have, in all ages, been as one man in *faith, obedience, and brotherly love*. They may have disputed, they may have disagreed, concerning subordinate opinions, which did not sensibly interfere with any of the great Catholic verities of our most holy faith, nor with any of the sacred institutions of our blessed Lord, and His inspired Apostles; but in every country, and in every age, those who were not openly repudiated as heretics and schismatics, have, without any difference of opinion, been unanimous in receiving and maintaining the leading doctrines and institutions of the Gospel. They have ever referred to the Holy Scriptures as the great repository of revealed truth, and been unanimous in applying to the same source¹, for information concerning the true meaning of any passage not wholly explicit, and the exact features of any Ordinance not exactly defined in those sacred records: that is, they have been unanimous in professing the deepest regard for that which was *first* in the Church, and in rejecting that which is *subsequent*; in adhering, both in faith and in practice, both in doctrine and in obedience, to the guidance of inspired teachers; and in cases, where this is either

¹ Primitive Testimony.

doubtful or uncertain, in having recourse to the interpretation and rule of Catholic antiquity^m. Hence, as the Church of Christ is the kingdom of peace, so, wheresoever this mark of unity has been fully preserved, the Church has appeared in her beauty; there she has put on her strength, there she has put on her beautiful garmentsⁿ: whereas, whenever this unity has been disturbed, the portion of the Church with which the guilt rests, has become a bye-word among the heathen, and a hissing and reproach among all nations. To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; to submit with child-like humility, to be instructed in the faith, to be made acquainted with the Ordinances, and to be trained up in the brotherly love and charity peculiar to the holy family of God, is the Christian's great duty. Nor will it do to say, that this unity is merely internal, and not also external. Internal unity of principle, must produce external agreement among the members of the Church, otherwise it is like faith without works. It may, however, be safely asserted, that in all ages of the Church, multitudes were to be found who were agreed in all the great principles of unity. They maintained the *doctrines*, revered the *Ordinances*, and respected the *Ministers*

^m Vide "The Rule of Faith," a Sermon by H. E. Manning, M.A.

ⁿ Isa. lii. 1.

of the Gospel; and in all these respects, they were as one in principle with those who went before: and so those who come after, to the end of time, will be as one with them, and with one another. Thus, in *opinion* there may be differences, even among the faithful; but in *principle* there will be the strictest unity. When I contemplate the *result* of unity, I see in it the reason of our blessed Lord's anxiety for the preservation of this distinguishing characteristic of His holy Church. He is the Prince of Peace; His Church is the Kingdom of Peace; and His design in establishing it upon earth, is to prepare its members for the realms of Peace, in the presence of God. All the members of the Church triumphant, will be as one man in giving glory to God. The marks of His holy Church will there be seen glowing in noon-day brightness; for all, with the humility and love of little children, will be as One in seeking to know and to do the will of God; in being made happy through the Divine grace, and in reverencing the authority of the great and eternal God, into whose very presence they have been brought. There will be no "envying," nor "strife," nor "divisions," among the blessed inhabitants above. There will be nothing to disturb the peace of Christ's everlasting kingdom. All will be love and peace and unity. As a place of training for that glorious state,

the Church on earth is intended; and would its members humbly and faithfully submit themselves to this gracious design, the Church militant would exhibit a correct likeness of the Church triumphant. Christians, whilst yet upon earth, would begin to taste the happiness of heaven. The very Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of love and peace and unity, would reign triumphant; and the fruits would be apparent: all would be unity and peace and love. The members of this holy family would not only acknowledge One Lord, and profess One faith; but they would also continue in One holy fellowship. They would be no more like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; but would speak the truth in love, and grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ^o. Would to God that all who bear the Christian name, would seriously reflect on the heaven-like character, the angelic blessedness, of such a state of things; and surely none among them would be found, who would not feel the love of Christ constraining them to promote and to maintain entire unity within the bosom of Christ's holy Church.

Q. Is then schism, or separation from the Church of God, a sin of dangerous character?

A. It is a sin of such dangerous character, that I

• Vide Eph. iv. passim.

fully believe no one, who has duly investigated either its origin or its consequences, would dare to rush into it. To separate one's self from that society, which is the body of Christ, and which continues stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, betrays a spirit which the faithful Christian shudders to contemplate; and on which, even they who have yielded obedience to it, will scarcely dare to look. It is the spirit of *pride and discord and rebellion*: even the self-same spirit that appeared in the arch-apostate, and gave origin to dissension and division in the kingdom of God: the self-same spirit of emulation and strife and division, which the Apostle declares to be the mark of the carnal mind: the self-same spirit which gave rise to heresies, and kindled the fires of persecution in former ages; and which still so wofully distracts the kingdom of peace here upon earth^p. But the carnal mind is at enmity against God; and hence it is said, that they who separate themselves have not the Spirit of God^q. The following remarkable passage in the first Epistle of St. John^r, not only proves that schism originates in a rebellious spirit, but also indicates, that it consists in refusing to be taught by those who continue in the Apostles' fellowship. "We are of God," said

^p 1 Cor. iii. 3.

^q St. Jude 19.

^r Chap. iv. 6.

the beloved Disciple; "he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Lightly may these words be esteemed; yet surely they are no vain words; nay, they are the words of eternal truth, by which men will be judged at the last day. Yet, in the present age, divisions in the Church are by many accounted circumstances of trifling moment. But why, it may be asked, are they so accounted? Merely because they are common. Let not men, however, be deceived: if the word of God be true, although few things be more common, yet few things are more dangerous. The language in which this is revealed is so explicit, that it can with difficulty be glossed over, and can never be explained away. It is fashionable—but the fashion is dangerous—to place *schism* far in the back-ground of the picture portraying the Christian warfare. Hence it is, that numbers give themselves little or no trouble concerning it: that thousands could scarcely even tell what it is: and that the great majority of our countrymen and countrywomen, account it illiberal and wrong, to make any mention of this great sin. This is indeed very strange: still the word of God, and not the fashion of the day, must be the Christian's safest guide in this, as well as in every other import-

ant duty. I am the more deeply impressed with a sense of the heinousness of this sin, when I look at its consequences. "Envy, strife, and divisions," are its bitter fruits; and plentifully have these fruits been produced in the world, ever since the days of Cain. The kingdom of peace has often been converted into an arena of bitter contention. Instead of humble submission to the Divine law, there has been constant insubordination. Rival sects are not only striving for the mastery, but are even inflamed with the most rancorous feelings of hatred towards each other. Instead of concord there is dissension; instead of order there is confusion; instead of that unity which prevailed, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul^s," the land is filled with sects and parties of many different names, and as many different doctrines. Nor is this all. Brotherly love would best become those who call Jesus, Lord; but instead thereof, there is relentless persecution. Our Lord earnestly prayed, that the conduct of His servants might exhibit an indisputable proof, that He had come into the world; but instead thereof, the conduct of many who bear the Christian name is such, as to make the dominion of our Lord a byeword and derision. Such may still wish to be

^s Acts iv. 32.

ranked within the pale of Christ's Church; and may be offended when they are reminded, that they have separated from its Communion. But it is by rejecting the doctrines, and separating from the fellowship, of the Apostles, that the spirit of pride and rebellion has, in former times, driven men to deeds which are a disgrace to the Christian name, and which still urges them on to similar acts of iniquity. Can then this spirit be from above? Let St. James say: "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth: this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish[†]." No great wonder, then, that the early Christian Fathers looked upon the sin of schism with such horror, and that they were even doubtful whether it was pardonable. Viewed in its true character, and in connection with its fruits, no one, who has any regard for the peace of our blessed Lord's kingdom, would venture to encourage this sin: yet many so far deceive themselves, in regard to it, that they yield to its dominion without the least reluctance, and never suppose, that the serious evils connected with it, are, in any respect, encouraged by them. Such a thought would make them miserable; and yet how they can escape from such a thought, I know not. Perhaps they may

[†] St. James iii. 14, &c.

imagine, that an attempt to live at peace with all different sects and denominations, is sufficient proof, that they are animated by a true Christian spirit, and ample excuse for having left the Church, and joined themselves to another denomination; a denomination, perhaps, whose communion is fashionable or convenient, and whose preachers are eminent and popular. Now I willingly admit, that their endeavours to promote peace, even under such adverse circumstances, are highly praiseworthy, and clearly indicate, that with a little more attention to consequences, they would probably be led to do justice to the spirit of unity, which still struggles within them, in opposition to the spirit of schism, to which they have thoughtlessly yielded themselves. Would they seriously consider, that separation from that Church, which exhibits the eternal *marks* of truth; in other words, from those, who abide steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, must inevitably, and, in spite of every effort to the contrary, lead to dissension and strife, they would scarcely be able to vindicate their conduct to their own conscience, far less to God. To lend their sanction to division in the Church, and then to attempt to make men of the most opposite and hostile principles harmonize and live in peace, is a vain thought. Such may be men's ways to produce unity and love,

but such are not God's ways. They who attempt such a thing, may, in many respects, be amiable, and good, and meek, and pious; but they are in error, in regard to the consequences of tearing Christ's seamless garment asunder. Even the Roman soldiers, who were rude heathens, would not rend our Lord's vesture, as they well knew that its use would thereby be at an end. Great, then, must be the mistake of those, who would cause divisions and schisms in Christ's One holy Church, and yet suppose, that its beneficial design will not thereby be wholly marred.—Still, any attempt to reclaim those labouring under such mistaken notions, would probably be futile; for another dreadful consequence of yielding to the spirit of division, is, the utter captivity into which the faculties of the soul are immediately and forcibly led. Its victims may be warned of their danger, but they will be able to apprehend none: they will rather be led to conclude that they are right, and that such as would say a single word to the contrary, are wrong. Referring to the word of truth, I find, that Korah and his company, instead of listening to Moses, asserted their own holiness. "Ye take too much upon you," said they, "seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them. Will you put out the eyes of these men?"

^u Num. xvi.

I find also, that the inhabitants of the land of Israel, when invited to return to the worship of God at Jerusalem, laughed to scorn, and mocked those, who were sent to recal them to their duty*. Other instances might be cited, but let these suffice. On the other hand, let investigation be made, and it must excite surprise, when it is found how few instances can be cited from the sacred narrative, where men, when once led captive by the spirit of apostacy, were persuaded, either by argument or by entreaty, to return to the Church of the living God. This is a remarkable fact, plainly indicating that they who once yield to this dangerous and deceitful spirit, do not only become blind to their error, but are also held in utter thralldom. The grievousness of the sin of schism may be pointed out, but they will be ready to excuse their conduct on the plea of holiness; the most pressing arguments may be used, to induce them to return to the communion of the One holy Church of God, but they will openly ridicule, or hold in silent contempt, the man who would recal them to a sense of duty. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," is the mournful language of our blessed Lord, in reference to those who would not submit to be gathered into the fold of His Church; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have

* 2 Chron. xxx. 10.

gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" The spirit of schism, is indeed the spirit of the carnal mind, and its fruits will poison even the most pious soul. Instead of humble and entire submission to the Divine authority, there will be a constant desire to exalt self-will and private judgment, in every instance where obedience would be disagreeable; hence all that is revealed on the subject, will be disregarded, and all that may be said, will be set down as the language of intolerance and uncharitableness: the conduct of the faithful will be derided, not imitated; and if they themselves, who are in such captivity, were capable of observing it, they would perceive, that the whole of their religious life and conversation was animated by a new and strange spirit.

Q. You therefore consider it necessary to attend to these marks, before you join in communion with any portion of the Church of Christ?

A. I consider it absolutely necessary; for by attending to these three simple marks with sufficient care, the true Church of God may, in all ages and in all places, be distinguished from imitations of it established by human invention. On the one hand, these simple marks will prevent me from declining into the errors of the middle ages; and, on the

other, they will restrain me from running heedlessly on into the novelties of more modern times. They will continually fix my attention on that which was *first* in the Church, and so prevent me from being deceived by any thing that is *subsequent*. They will enable me to comprehend the design, and to revere the government, of the Church; and hence, to feel it to be both my duty and my interest, to embrace its doctrines in their true and catholic sense, and to receive its Ordinances in their primitive and proper form. In few words, they will compel me to esteem our blessed Lord and Redeemer, as all in all in His Church; as the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, whom I, as a faithful disciple, am to love, honour, and obey; as, at once, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and the Author and Giver of life.

Q. Are these your reasons for adhering steadfastly to the Protestant Episcopal Church?

A. Yes! I deem it my duty to remain in her Communion, and my happiness that she clearly exhibits all the distinctive marks of a pure branch of "the Holy Catholic Church;" and is capable, if I be a faithful and obedient child of her Communion, to train me up for the Church triumphant in heaven. Her doctrines and services are of scriptural purity, and of primitive authority; her mode of administering the means of grace, is solemn, and calculated to

excite purely devotional feelings in the mind of the worshipper; and her Ministers are so connected with the Redeemer, and so dependant on His Commission, that they must ever esteem Him as the chief corner-stone in the glorious fabric of the Church of God. It must, therefore, be my own fault, if I am not a lively member of Christ, a dutiful child of God, and a full heir of the kingdom of heaven. I could not, therefore, separate myself from the communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church of these realms, without incurring the sin of *schism*, which means *a separation without cause* from the household of God.

Part Second.

Q. GOOD CHRISTIAN: You say that you cannot separate yourself from the Protestant Episcopal Church, which has all the distinguishing marks of a true branch of the Holy Catholic Church. This may be all very well, in cases where you can conveniently attend Divine Service in that Church; but there are many situations, in which you may be placed, where this could not be done without much trouble, or where it might be next to impracticable. In Scotland, for instance, where in all districts the chapels of the Episcopal Church are but thinly scattered, and where in many, there is no place of meeting within twelve or twenty miles; do you think, that in such cases, you would be justified in forsaking the communion of the Church?

A. As I consider my duty to God to be a matter of extreme importance, and one with which I cannot venture to trifle, I should not consider myself justified in consulting my convenience at the expense of my fidelity. Heaven is a prize worth contending for. As a Christian, therefore, I think it my highest interest and privilege to seek it in the first place, and, as far as possible, without regard to the trifling

obstacles which the world may throw in the way, or the relaxed principles of many may magnify, to keep in the exact path which the Redeemer opened up, and which His Apostles and earliest followers recommended, as leading safely through this state of probation, into the inheritance prepared for the faithful. In a word, I should not consider myself a worthy disciple of Christ, if I were ready on every occasion, to throw down the cross which He commands me to bear, or be driven by every trifling circumstance from the post of duty. I should not, therefore, consider myself at liberty to forsake the communion of the Church, on account of any worldly consideration, or neglect to attend Divine Worship within her sanctuary, as often as circumstances rendered my attendance practicable. When God points out the way, I consider it my interest, not less than my duty, to walk in that way.

Q. But there are other communities, the religious houses of which may be near at hand; could you not attend public worship in any of these?

A. In the world, there are unfortunately so many denominations, holding so many different and even discordant opinions, that it appears impossible all can be portions of the Church of Christ^a. Amid such diversity, the sincere Christian must be careful

^a 1 John ii. 18, 19.

how he makes his choice. To trust to chance in a matter, where the honour of God, and his own happiness are concerned, would betray a spirit of indifference, incompatible with the character of a faithful disciple of Christ^b; and perhaps the attention which, amid such variety of sects, is requisite in determining the branches of the true and Catholic Church of God, becomes an important means by which his fidelity is tried^c. Amid so many temptations to turn aside, it is a matter of peculiar difficulty, to hold fast the profession of faith without wavering^d. In looking into the Bible, I find the Almighty laying the most positive injunctions on His people of old, not to offer their sacrifices in every place, but only in that which He should appoint^e. As the word of God is the rule of duty to me, in ecclesiastical as well as moral principle, I consider this injunction to be binding on me as a Christian, not to worship in every place, but only in that which has the marks of truth impressed by the finger of God^f. There can be but ONE Church of Christ, properly so called^g; viz. that which is distinguished by the three marks already mentioned^h.

^b 1 Thess. v. 21.

^c St. Matt. xxiv. 24.

^d St. Matt. xxiv. 11, 12.

^e Deut. xii. 13.

^f Acts ii. 46; Rom. xvi. 17.

^g 1 Cor. xii. 12.

^h Acts ii. 42.

Although other religious communities may approach more or less nearly to this standard, yet as it is the Redeemer's earnest prayer that His followers may be all as *One*¹, and as His Apostles warn Christians, in clear and positive terms, to avoid such as cause divisions and schisms, I cannot bring my mind to think that it is a matter of indifference, to countenance such as have departed a single step from any of the great marks of truth^k. I more especially feel this to be my duty, in a country where no particular necessity or cause can be urged for such departure. Therefore, in one word, I could not conscientiously attend worship in a religious community, deficient in any of the distinguishing marks, and so maintaining divisions in doctrine or in discipline¹. I wish, however, not to be misunderstood on this subject. Although fidelity to principle, as a member of the Church of God, prevents me from joining in the religious services of any community, which does not clearly exhibit all the marks of a lively and sound branch of the Church of Christ; yet charity tells me to hope and trust, that many who attend such places, are sincere according to the extent of their knowledge, and hence that they will, in all proba-

¹ St. John xvii. 20, 21.

^k 2 Thess. iii. 6.

¹ James i. 8; St. Jude 20, 21; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; St. John xv. 4. Rev. ii. 10.

bility, be received as good and faithful servants into the Church triumphant; but as I have been blessed with an opportunity of knowing the marks of the truth more fully than they may know them, and am a member of a portion of the Church which clearly exhibits them, I consider it my duty, on the one hand, to remain stedfast in my profession^m, and, on the other, to pass no uncharitable sentence on those who differ from meⁿ. I am assured by an Apostle, that they who err without knowledge of the law, shall be judged according to their knowledge; but I am also reminded, that if I know my Lord's will and do it not, I shall be beaten with many stripes^o. With regard to the importance of each of the marks of truth, there may be thousands who are kept in great ignorance; some may not be encouraged to value the Divine Word; some may be misled with regard to the nature and importance of the Sacraments; and others may be kept in total ignorance concerning the necessity of a regularly commissioned Ministry; and yet many belonging to each of these parties, may sincerely wish to approve themselves sincere disciples of Christ. Although, then, I perceive the error in which these men are, and am

^m Heb. x. 23.

ⁿ St. Matt. vii. 1.

^o St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

therefore bound as a faithful disciple to avoid it, yet I dare not assume the right of passing sentence on such Christians. This is the prerogative of God. I am rather bound to recollect, that our Lord did not condemn the man who followed not with the Apostles^p, and consequently to hope, that all who name the Name of Christ will be saved; but at the same time to reflect, that many went back and walked no more with the Redeemer, when He told them of matters not agreeable to their prejudices; and to remember, that our Lord on that occasion was much affected, and asked the twelve, if they also would go away. This induces me to remain in the communion of the Church which exhibits the marks of truth, even although the great majority of my fellow mortals should, either through ignorance or from prejudice, withdraw themselves from her pale. When Jesus asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away? Simon answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." So I, when asked if I would leave the Protestant Episcopal Church? must answer, Whither should I go? for the Church to which I belong has certainly the marks of eternal truth, and is capable of training me up to eternal life. It would, on my part, betray a spirit of base ingratitude to Him who founded His

^p St. Luke ix. 49, 50.

Church for the sake of mankind, were I, on any account, to withdraw myself from its sacred border. It would be like turning my back on my Redeemer, because I should have less trouble by proceeding with more careless steps. From those to whom little is given, little will probably be required; but from those to whom much is given, much will undoubtedly be required. They who are ignorant of the distinguishing marks of the true Church, may peradventure be found blameless in the day of the Lord, even although they do stray from her border. Not so those to whom these marks are pointed out; not so I, who should have no plea for my infidelity, were I to wander away, and, without thought or concern, join myself to the first society which chance might throw in my way, or worldly motives might recommend^a.

Q. But when you are so fully impressed with a sense of the importance of the marks of the true Church, your veneration for her Communion could not perhaps be much diminished by an occasional visit to the congregations of other religious societies?

A. I could not put such entire confidence in my Church principles, as to be sure that they would

^a Some severe remarks having been made on what is said in this place, a reply will be found in the APPENDIX.

suffer no injury from wandering from the Church. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" thou shalt not trifle with a positive duty; is a law which I am taught, both by the precept and by the example of the Redeemer. But even on the supposition, that my opinions might remain unchanged, I certainly should consider myself as extremely guilty, were my practice to be at complete variance with my principles. No man could well suppose, that the best way of proving his regard for virtue, was to venture into the haunts of vice: so no Christian should ever think of trying the steadiness of his Ecclesiastical principles, by frequenting places of worship among those whose principles are at variance with his own^r. His principles must be lax indeed, before he could make such a foolish trial. But there is another light in which I should view this matter. I should certainly consider myself involved in the guilt of others, were that guilt in any way owing to my conduct. All may not be equally well informed as I am with regard to Ecclesiastical subjects, nor may the principles of all be equally well established. If, then, those who observe my conduct, or are in any degree influenced by my example, have reason to conclude, from my practice, that it is a matter of no great importance

^r Vide Note B.

to wander occasionally from the Church of God, I may be totally unconscious of the guilt which they may contract on account of such lax notions, but I am far from sure that I should not have to answer for it. I believe the *moral* precepts of the Gospel to be of a very sacred nature, and were I, either by advice or by example, to encourage the ignorant or the thoughtless to set them at nought, I should deservedly be esteemed an enemy to God and goodness. But I conscientiously believe the Church of Christ, to be an institution equally sacred as the Divine laws themselves. It is "the Pillar and Ground of the Truth:" the *pillar*, appointed by God Himself for supporting those truths which He has revealed: the *ground*, on which He has established the kingdom of truth in the world: therefore if, either by advice or example, I encourage any to slight the Church of God, I cannot discover how I shall be blameless. I consider myself bound, as a faithful soldier of Christ, not only to defend His religion and Church against every attack, but also by word and by example to recommend to others, what I myself sincerely believe to be impressed with the marks of truth. But who could be induced by my conduct to respect the Church to which I adhere, were I apparently to trifle with a matter so sacred? I perceive that those who belong to portions of the

Church obviously impure, and communities evidently deficient in some of the marks of the true Church, are most strenuous both in defending and recommending what they believe to be true. Surely if they are faithful to their cause, I should be much to blame were I less so; and yet it is possible that some, whose duty it is to support the truth, may be less zealous than those who are the abettors of a less meritorious cause. God's people of old were guilty in this respect; their unfaithful conduct is contrasted with the more consistent practice of the heathen who worshipped dumb idols: "Pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing: hath a nation changed their gods, which yet were no gods? but My people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit^s." I am not one of those, who consider the recommendation and defence of the Church, to be confined to her commissioned Ministers alone. I look on every one of her members, as bound to promote and protect her cause; I know that the eyes of the world are on me, and I trust in God, that I shall be enabled to set such an example of fidelity, as shall command the respect, if not the approbation, of all men.

^s Jer. ii. 10, 11.

Q. But might you not hear as good an advice in another place, as in the Church possessing all these marks of truth?

A. Probably I might do so, and I will admit, that I should almost invariably do so, and that I might often derive very important instruction in the assemblies of those religious communities, which are deficient in some of the marks of the true Church; but this is not the reason why I keep back from attending them. There would certainly be no harm in hearing a good advice from any person or in any place, but there would be much harm in disturbing the kingdom of peace by divisions and differences. There would be harm in setting up my own wisdom for the wisdom of God, and, like our first parents, seeking for knowledge from other sources than that which God has recommended. There would be harm in lending my aid to put an end to that unity in the Church, for which our Lord so earnestly prayed. There would be harm in setting an example highly dangerous to those, whose knowledge of Ecclesiastical affairs is not extensive, or whose religious principles are not fully formed; and there would be harm in not shewing to the world, that I considered the character of the Church of Christ to be of a nature so sacred, as to command the profound respect of every sincere and faithful disciple of our

Lord. Our Lord prayed that there might be *unity* among His followers, and I maintain, without fear of contradiction, that in every portion of the Church which has not obviously departed from the truth, there has been a full agreement among her members, concerning the three grand marks by which the Church has ever been distinguished. In *all places*, and at *all times*, and among *all true Christians*, the *word of God*, in its true and catholic meaning, has been received as the only rule of faith; the *means of grace*, instituted by our Lord, have ever been resorted to, as the channels through which the Divine aid is imparted; and the regularly *commissioned Ministry* has been recognized and received as the ambassadors for Christ. Whenever, or wherever this agreement has not prevailed, then and there the Church has fallen into error, and stood in need of reformation.—But I would farther remark, that it is not merely to hear a good advice that I attend the house of God. I go into the sanctuary to join in the worship which is addressed to God. The Service of the Church, and not the sermon, is what peculiarly forms the worship of God. The former embraces prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and lessons of instruction, taken from the sacred word of God; the latter is a composition of the Minister who officiates. Hence the one, as its foundation is the

word of truth, must be correct in doctrine, and useful in preparing me for the society of heaven; the other, as its character depends on human wisdom and prudence, may occasionally be far from safe or instructive. I am always surprised, therefore, when I hear Christians speak of going to church, chiefly with the view of hearing a sermon, and apparently indifferent about the worship of God. Now I go to church principally with the view of worshipping God, and if at the same time I hear a good sermon, I am well pleased. I should, however, continue to attend church and worship God, with equal regularity, although a sermon were rarely to be heard. The sermon merely *reminds* me of my duty; the Service of the Church, is the means through which I *discharge* a most important duty. Hence, I do not consider the advice which I should receive of such consequence, as for its sake to countenance division in the Church of Christ. When I join a congregation of Christians, it is as much as to say, that I approve of their doctrine and discipline; for if this is not the case, my conduct distinctly proves, that I venture to serve God in a way of which my own conscience does not approve. I pray to God to deliver me from heresy and schism; my prayer must be a direct insult to the majesty of God, if my practice shew that my petitions are preferred in mere mockery.

Q. It may sometimes be dangerous to remain in the communion of the Church, as in seasons of persecution; and sometimes highly injurious to worldly interests, as in places where an agreement with the doctrines of the established religion, whether true or false, is requisite as a qualification for some lucrative office : what would you do in such cases ?

A. There can be no difficulty in determining the line of conduct, which I ought to follow on such occasions. I am aware that thousands and tens of thousands have made shipwreck of their faith in times of persecution; and I have great reason to suspect, that numbers equally great, are but too apt to sacrifice religious duty to worldly interests. But I humbly trust in God, that persecution would not drive me from the Church, nor the love of the things of this world tempt me to forsake her Communion. It is only he that endures to the end that shall be saved; only he that is willing to lay down his life for the sake of the truth, that shall save it in the day of the Lord. As to the riches of the world, they would profit me little, if for their sake I became indifferent about eternal riches, and the salvation of my own soul. I should, therefore, despise their rage who could only destroy the body, but not hurt the soul; I should value as nought those worldly

distinctions, which could be purchased only by the sacrifice of the sure promise of eternal riches and eternal glory.

Q. But we shall suppose that the peace of the family in which you live, depends on your leaving the Church, and attending some other religious communion: would not such a circumstance be sufficient reason to justify your attendance at the place which would restore peace in the family?

A. The religion of Jesus is certainly the religion of love; and it binds me to do every thing in my power to cultivate peace with all men. I am, therefore, never to make religion a means of dissension through any fault of mine, nor pertinaciously to adhere to any principle not sanctioned by the Word of God; but still I should not consider myself at liberty to leave the communion of the Church, even if my adherence to it should unhappily prove the means of domestic dissension; moreover, the peace of a family, which would thus be cemented by division in the Church, would be unhallowed. It is not agreeable to my principles to be unfaithful to God, in hopes that I shall thereby reap advantage among men, although it is my great desire to cultivate peace with all men, as part of my duty to God. I should certainly blame myself, did I obtrude my religious opinions in a way calculated to ruffle the temper or

wound the prejudices of those among whom I live ; but, on the other hand, I should not feel myself at liberty to depart from a positive duty to God, in hopes of being more esteemed among men.

Q. But are you convinced in your own mind, that this strict line of conduct is really agreeable to the will of God ?

A. I am so convinced, otherwise I should not feel so confident concerning the line of conduct I ought to pursue. Our blessed Lord and Master has expressly assured me, that He came not to send peace but a sword on earth, on account of religion. "Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three[†]." This plainly proves to me, that He clearly foresaw the divisions concerning His holy religion, which would take place among men; even such divisions as we have now been considering, divisions interfering with the peace of families. But His warning to His followers is, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." Our blessed Lord gives no sanction to apostacy from the true faith of His

[†] St. Luke xii. 51, 52; St. Matt. x. 34.

holy Name, nor from the sacred communion of His holy Church; nay, not even for the sake of the nearest and dearest relations in life; but warns those who would venture on such a step, that they are not worthy of Him. How little soever this may be attended to in the present day by many, who, for the sake of father or mother, husband or wife, would never hesitate to change their creed, and forsake the Church; yet I cannot believe that our Lord's words concerning this matter have passed away, or that I should be worthy of Him, if I treated His solemn admonitions, and even His heavenly doctrines and sacred institutions, with disrespect. No, no: if I love father or mother, brother or sister; if I esteem any one, be his relation to me what it may; if I value any object in the wide range of creation more than the heavenly truths which He has revealed, and the communion of that Church, which is indeed our Lord's body^u; I am not worthy of Him, and should run the greatest possible risk of being disowned by Him at the last day. The general practice of the world, has indeed thrown this truth into the shade. Let one look around and observe how little it is regarded: but neither is the danger nor the truth less on this account. Although all men should fall away, yet

^u Eph. i. 23; iv. 12.

would the Word of God stand sure ; and with the Divine Word I dare not trifle. If I be not thought worthy of our blessed Lord and Saviour, it will profit me little if I gain the whole world besides. In allusion to the false notions concerning religion, which should prevail in these latter times in which our lot is cast, our Lord also tells me, that many shall be deceived ; that the very elect shall be in danger ; and that it is only those who endure to the end that shall be saved. I know that our Saviour loved me, even to the laying down of His life for my sake ; and so I must consider every advice of His as meant for my good. I therefore feel confident, that my conduct is agreeable to the will of God, and the spirit of the Christian religion, if I hold fast the profession of my faith without wavering ; but, at the same time, never forgetting that I am bound not purposely to give offence, by the manner in which I maintain my principles. I am rather to submit quietly to my unhappy fate, when these principles prove the cause of offence ; to pray earnestly to God to turn the hearts of my adversaries, and to beseech Him to grant me strength to endure my trials with patient fidelity, and grace to behave with that meekness which will put to silence those who would condemn my principles ; so that I may, like the Lord and Giver of

life, finish my course, if not with joy, at least with a clear conscience.

Q. Do you not think, that these principles tend to impede the spirit of love and charity which the Christian ought to feel towards all men, to what sect or denomination soever they may belong?

A. I certainly do not think that the highest regard for the truth, can have the least tendency to diminish that love and charity for all men, which the sincere Christian ought to feel. Our blessed Lord, on every occasion, shewed the highest regard for the truth, both by revealing what was right, and by reproving what was wrong; and yet He so loved the world, that He laid down His life for all—for enemies as well as friends. The beloved Disciple, in his epistles, recommends love for each other as the very characteristic of a true Christian, and yet he expressly reminds us of the duty of continuing stedfastly in all the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and sternly reproves those who, in any respect, depart from these. All the Apostles were, without doubt, imbued with the greatest love for their brethren of mankind, and with that most excellent gift of charity; they spent their days, and were willing even to lay down their lives, in order that the truth might be made known to all the nations of the earth; yet they sharply rebuked

error, wheresoever they found it, and unequivocally condemned divisions in the Church, wheresoever they perceived them. On these holy examples, I build my practice; and hence must conclude, that the strongest proof of charitable love that I can exhibit, is to warn men of their errors, and to point out to them, as far as I am able, the narrow path in which our Lord trode, and in which His disciples, to the end of time, ought to follow. "Charity rejoiceth in the truth;" and, therefore, would not justify me in leading any one to believe, that error or indifference, in regard to things sacred, is harmless or safe. As a member of Christ's holy Church, I am taught to pray for all sorts and conditions of men, "that God would be pleased to make His ways known unto them, His saving health unto all nations;" and, "that it would please Him to bring into the way of truth, all such as have erred and are deceived;" and, "that He would have mercy upon all men." In short, as Christ loved all and died for all, so I, as a member of Christ, consider myself bound to love all, and to do good to all; and this, I am persuaded, I can in no way more effectually accomplish, than by using every lawful and prudent means to bring it about; "that all, who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the

bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." I frankly admit that, in my opinion, Christian love, or charity, does not go the length of deceiving any one, by speaking peace, where there is no peace; or of alluring the unwary into danger, by calling evil good, or good evil; or of making any one indifferent to things sacred, by the groundless and unscriptural assertion, that it will make no difference at the day of judgment, whether a man has endeavoured, in all respects, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; or has, on account of convenience, or interest, or prejudice, or some such carnal motive, separated himself, and thus lent his aid to promote dissension, and strife, and all sorts of bitterness among those who bear the Christian name. Such charity is, in my estimation, no charity at all, but a disgraceful laxity of principle, of which every one who calls himself a Christian ought to be heartily ashamed. With such spurious charity, I have no sympathy. Its tendency is to mislead, not to guide into the narrow path of truth, those who, through ignorance or indifference, or such like cause, are wandering in the bye-ways of error. But to that charity, which our blessed Lord and His holy Apostles recommended, I certainly do lay claim. The principles of the Church of which I am a member, would utterly condemn me, were not

such charity mine. These principles, if rightly understood, teach loving-kindness to all, as well as reverence for every doctrine, and precept, and ordinance, of the Gospel.

Q. What advantage do the members of the Church enjoy from embracing these principles?

A. The advantage of being able to appeal to the *whole* word of God, as the standard of their belief. They, and they only, who hold these principles, can embrace the truth in its fulness. Others must take only such parts of it as are not repugnant to their own peculiar systems. No greater mistake can well be imagined, than theirs who suppose that the distinguishing characteristics of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, are her Episcopal form of government, and her Liturgical mode of worship. "It would not be amiss," says an American writer*, "for those who entertain such an opinion, again to walk about our Zion, and mark well her bulwarks." If there be one thing more than another, by which the Church is distinguished from all sects and communities in the world, it is this; that she embraces the *whole* word of God, revealed in the Old and New Testaments, as it branches out into a system of theology, and an Ecclesiastical history; and duly venerates *every* means of grace

* Vide Churchman, Vol. viii. No. 15.

which the Gospel unfolds, and declares to be profitable to salvation; and fully acknowledges the Divine authority in *all things*, by giving the highest honour to our God and Saviour, and shewing the most implicit submission to His holy will. These are the principal characteristics of the Church; and so peculiarly are they her own, that no sectarian community can lay claim to them all, but must, in part, be without them. Hence, none but the Churchman dare view, as *one grand system*, all the doctrines, precepts, and institutions of Revelation; and appeal to the testimony of Ecclesiastical history, from the patriarchal ages to the present; and, at the same time, entertain the sincerest love and most boundless charity for all for whom Christ died, even for all mankind. The Churchman has no system but that of the Bible to support; he, therefore, rejoices greatly, if he can make men sensible of how much it is their interest to embrace this system; but where he fails in this, he may, and ought to be, sorry for those who follow another course; but he has no cause whatsoever to entertain towards such any other feeling, than that of true Christian love and charity.

Q. There is another case, respecting which I should be glad to know your opinion: we shall suppose, that the Minister, to whose flock you

belong, is a careless Pastor, who gives himself little disturbance, although he sees the wolf coming; or, who is so ill qualified for being a guide to the blind, and a help to the lame, that he leaves them to perish; or, who is so unprincipled and base, that he attempts, by advice or by example, to diminish their respect for one or more of the marks of the true Church. Would you not, in such a case, consider yourself as justified in leaving the fold of such an unfaithful Pastor?

A. I should consider it a most grievous misfortune to be under the care of such a Pastor; but still, his infidelity would be but a poor excuse for my apostacy. God may, perhaps, mean to prove my fidelity by this severe trial. I would therefore, I trust, pray earnestly to God, to keep me steadfast under such trying circumstances; but I should never once think of forsaking the communion of the Church. I am well aware, that I am but too apt to err, and to stray from the way of truth, even like a lost sheep; and that I have, therefore, great need of a faithful Pastor to watch over my ways, and to bring me home to the fold of Christ, whenever I may wander from its sacred border. But if my Pastor be not thus faithful, this very circumstance would put me more on my guard, and excite me to redoubled diligence, lest I should lose the narrow

way, and finally perish. If he who ought to guide my steps aright, were careless or ignorant, or even positively disposed to mislead me, still there is one circumstance which, I trust, would preserve me in such a season of trial: the portion of the Church to which I belong, has taken care that the whole counsel of God shall be made known to her members, by means of her public Services, and thus I am in some measure rendered independent of the peculiar conduct of my Pastor. St. Paul tells me, that I am to account of my Christian Minister as a servant of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God^y. And this he does without reference to the Minister's personal character or qualifications; with which I, as a layman, have very little to do. On looking into the Ordination Service, I find, that no one is admitted into the sacred office, until every means within the reach of man have been used, both to ascertain his fitness, and to remind him of the awfully responsible nature of the Ministerial office^z. He is solemnly ordained to be the servant of God, and cautiously entrusted with the commission of our Lord. It is his *ministerial*, not his *personal* character, with which I, as a layman, have to do. Be the latter what it may, if he have Christ's com-

^y 1 Cor. iv. 1.

^z See also Canons of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

mission, he is to be esteemed by me, as an ambassador for Christ; as one clothed with that authority, which alone gives validity to all his official deeds. A man may have authority to preach to others, and yet himself be of a reprobate mind. We have no reason to suppose, that the acts of Judas, in his apostolical capacity, were not accompanied by the Divine blessing, and as efficient to the salvation of souls as those of Peter or John. To esteem the ambassador for Christ by his own personal qualifications, is to put the servant in the place of his Lord, to set *man* up as the idol of veneration, instead of giving the glory to our God and Redeemer. But God is jealous of His honour, and will doubtless visit upon their own heads, the sins of those who thoughtlessly or impiously do so: and, perhaps, the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on such, as thus in a manner put their trust in man, and in their heart go from God, is, that they be given up to the effects of their folly, and led to prize *personal qualifications*, instead of the *authority of Christ*, through Whom alone is salvation. It is thus that this sin, like every other, will be found to involve, in some measure, its own punishment. It is not, therefore, from the Minister, as a man, that I have been taught to seek salvation, but from Christ, through His duly authorized servant.

Hence, if my Christian Pastor have his Lord's commission to teach the law of the Lord, and dispense the means of grace, that is enough for me. If he is God's servant, it is not my part to judge him, whether he be faithful or not^a, but to receive him, even as I would receive the Lord Jesus^b. He can neither give nor withhold the blessing on his labours^c: he may preach to others, and call them to repentance, and yet be himself a castaway^d. It is only those who idolize man, and degrade the Redeemer; only those who lack faith in Christ, and suppose that He can convey His blessings through none but what they judge to be proper channels, that can think otherwise. But I would ask such, What are human qualifications, in comparison of the Divine blessing? What is the ambassador, in comparison of his Commission? What is the steward, in comparison of the Master, whose bounty he dispenses? The servant may be unfaithful, but the Lord of the servant is faithful, and will, undoubtedly, perform what He has promised. The servant may be a traitor—a devil^e; but He, whose apostle he is, and whose message he brings, can neither lie nor repent, and will be with those whom He has sent, even unto the

^a Rom. xiv. 4.

^b St. John xiii. 20.

^c 1 Cor. iii. 7.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 27.

^e St. John vi. 70.

end of the world. I am thus emphatically taught, that the efficacy of the Christian Minister's official acts, depends entirely on the Commission which he holds from Christ, and not—as the language and practice of multitudes would lead one to suppose—on his own personal character and qualifications. My duty, therefore, is to obey them that have the rule over me in the Lord; and I no where read, that this duty is to be relaxed on account of the faults of the Minister. He could scarcely omit the reading of the ordinary Services, and, at the stated seasons, the dispensing of the means of grace; and were he so negligent, his Bishop would, in all probability, adopt means either to have the abuse corrected, or the unfaithful Pastor suspended from his sacred charge. I do not choose my religion by the character of my Minister, but by the marks, the indelible marks, of truth which it exhibits; and I am guided much in the same manner, in my opinion concerning my Pastor. I recognize him as such, not because he is good or bad, but because he has the Redeemer's commission to act in that capacity. Such is the doctrine of Scripture. Such, too, is the doctrine of the Church, who, in her *twenty-sixth* Article, thus speaks; "Although, in the visible Church, the evil be ever mixed with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the min-

istration of the Word and Sacraments; yet, forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's Ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such, as by faith and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men. Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that enquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they may be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and, finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed." Thus, if he be in fault, he will have to account for his conduct; but I should certainly be guilty before God, were I, on any pretence whatever, to slight the Divine laws, or forsake the communion of Christ's Church. I should regret the conduct of my Pastor, if unfaithful; but I should have no right to make his errors a plea for abandoning my principles. If I would enjoy a crown of life, I must be faithful unto death.

Q. But will not such strict principles, expose you to the ridicule of your companions?

A. Such may be the case; but what is that to me? Our Lord was exposed to the scoffs, the insults, and even the cruellest treatment, because He proclaimed the truth, and adhered to it. In no instance did He shrink from the open profession of it, and I am not ashamed to walk in His footsteps. If there is any thing wrong in my principles, if a single error can be clearly pointed out to me, I am most ready to relinquish such, and to draw nearer to the narrow path of truth. It is not prejudice, but a profound respect for the laws and institutions of God, that induces me to maintain any religious principles. To yield to ridicule is, in my opinion, wholly inconsistent with the character of a Christian. Ridicule may have an effect on the ignorant, the thoughtless, or the indifferent; but on him, who holds the truth in sincerity, it can have no effect at all. The Church of God, embracing the Divine word, the Divine grace, and the Divine Presence, is, in my opinion, the most serious and important matter with which mortals have any connection. To be influenced by ridicule, in regard to such a matter, is what no person of any reflection can ever be. I trust in God, the keenest mockery shall never induce me to slight what exhibits the distinctive marks of truth.

Q. But will it not be said, that these principles lead you to condemn all others?

A. If it is so said, the assertion is gratuitous and false. As a member of the Holy Catholic Church, I am taught to believe that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all^f," and that He "is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe^g." Hence, on account of His merits, who "tasted death for every man^h," I believe that every man will receive "according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or badⁱ:" for God "will render to every man according to his deeds;" *eternal life* to those who do well; *tribulation and anguish* to such as are contentious: to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God^k. But I also believe, that as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead; and that, as in the Father's house there are many mansions^l, so will the reward, even of those who are admitted into the Father's kingdom, vary, in proportion as they know their Lord's will, and do it. I therefore cannot shut my eyes to the clearly revealed truth, that those who build wood, or hay, or stubble, even on the true foundation of

^f 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^g Heb. ii. 9.

^h Rom. ii. 7, &c.

^g 1 Tim. iv. 10.

ⁱ 2 Cor. v. 10; Col. iii. 25.

^l St. John xiv. 2.

Christian faith, must be losers^m. But to what extent they shall suffer loss, I cannot tell, nor do I pretend to conjecture. My principles, therefore, lead me to *condemn* no man; but they certainly lead me to conclude, that they who are careless in seeking the truth, and in embracing it in all its purity and fullness, and in continuing faithful unto death, will have great cause to repent of their folly and indifference in the day of the Lord; whilst the plain declarations of the revealed Word, place it beyond mere conjecture, that there may be some who have done many wonderful works in the name of Christ, but who, on account of the spirit in which these works were done, will be shut out from the kingdom of our Lordⁿ. My principles, as an Episcopalian, therefore, lead me to warn all to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and to continue stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, lest, through carelessness in any of these respects, they be accounted workers of iniquity, when they expect to receive the reward of their labours; but if any slight such advice, and follow their own ways, and disregard one or more of the *marks* of the Church of Christ, it is not my province either to acquit or to condemn,

^m 1 Cor. iii. 15.

ⁿ Jude 19; Matt. vii. 23.

but to leave them in His hands, who will assuredly administer justice in mercy.

Q. But what is the great advantage of being so particular about these marks of the true Church?

A. The advantage of attending to the marks of the Church, must be obvious to every one who reflects that man is wholly indebted to God for the hopes of future happiness. By redemption, happiness was purchased. It is in the Church, that mortals are prepared for the enjoyment of this happiness. Hence the necessity of Divine instruction, by which men are informed concerning the laws and habits of heaven; and of Divine grace, by which they are enabled to comply with these laws, and to cultivate these habits; and of the Divine Presence, by which they may be invited and received into the household of God, and conducted through this state of probation to the inheritance which awaits them. The members of the Episcopal Church, cannot be induced to treat these matters but with the greatest respect. It is by means of them, that *Christ crucified*, and *life eternal*, are kept constantly in view, and shewn to be so connected, that we can hope to attain the latter, only through the merits of the former. By attending to the marks of the Church, the true believer is enabled to offer unto God a reasonable service; to serve Him "with the Spirit

and with the understanding also;" and further, to be able "to give to every one that asketh him, a reason of the hope that is in him."—It has been by attention to the self-same marks, that "the faith once delivered to the saints," and the holy Sacraments instituted by our Lord, and the sacred services embracing all the leading features of our blessed Lord's life, and the decent order at first established in the Church; have been preserved from age to age.—It was by attention to the same marks, that our fathers, in their several generations, were able both to hold fast, and to teach their children to hold fast, the profession of their faith without wavering, and not to be carried about with every wind of doctrine^o; nor to heap unto themselves teachers^p; nor to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits^q.—It is by attending to these indelible marks, that we now see reason to adhere to our fathers' faith, and our fathers' Church; and that we are able to give an answer to our children when they ask us, what we mean by the principles which we hold, and the services which we offer to the Lord our God^r. And it is by means of the same unchanging and unchangeable marks, that, in these latter and dangerous days, when the multitude of those that are

^o Eph. iv. 14.

^q 1 John iv. 1

^p 2 Tim. iv. 3.

^r Deut. vi. 20.

without, is split into numberless sects and parties, and confused and confounded with an endless variety of novelties; the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is still like Jerusalem, which "is built as a city that is at unity in itself^s." Thus, Episcopalians see the utmost advantage in attending to these things. Observing the many divisions and bitter dissensions, among those who have separated themselves, and the strange opinions and practices which are daily appearing among those, who seem to think that the religion of Christ is susceptible of ceaseless change and endless variety; and that novelty is the very soul of devotion, and constant excitement the very acmè of piety; and, aware of the unhappy effects of such things, not only on the misguided men and women themselves, but also on heathens and infidels; Episcopalians do not conceal their surprise, that men, professing even the least regard for the religion or the honour of our blessed Redeemer, should be careless about the *marks* by which His holy Church has ever been distinguished, and by means of which, its unity and its peace must ever be preserved. They do not fail to condemn a liberality which would go the length of eradicating all regard for the truth. They endeavour, by their example, to excite all men care-

^s Psalm cxxii. 3.

fully to review their principles, and seriously to reason with their own hearts, whether they really pay that regard to the foundation of their religious principles which its importance demands; or whether they are careless about the matter; or, in their decisions concerning it, are guided more by prejudice than by a regard for truth.

Q. But as thousands pay little regard to these things, can you state any reason, why the members of the Episcopal Church attach such importance to them?

A. The extreme importance of every doctrine, precept, and institution, of our most holy religion, is not, it is to be feared, very well understood, or generally appreciated. Thousands, imitating the example of our first parents, appear to think, that there is no harm in seeking for religious knowledge from sources which the word of God does not sanction: and thousands, like the men of Babel, impiously suppose, that they may reach heaven by means of their own devising. How boldly soever it may be denied, there is obviously among many, a great deficiency of faith in the necessity of relying wholly on the Son of God. For example; Many esteem themselves good and faithful Christians, and would be greatly shocked and offended, were it in the most distant way to be hinted, that they had not

a due regard for Christ, nor full faith in His merits; and yet, if it be true that respect for Christ, and faith in His name, are shewn by obedience to His commands, such a charge may certainly be established against them. Instead of submissively embracing the religion of Christ, they dishonour Him by framing a religion for themselves; instead of relying entirely on the propriety of what He has taught, and the efficacy of what He has instituted, they betray a want of faith, by trusting to their own judgment, and adapting both doctrines and institutions to their own prejudices. My meaning is this; Many are religious or obedient, except in the very point where inclination, or convenience, or interest, tempts them to disregard the Christian laws and institutions. They reverence Christ's authority, whilst there is no temptation or inducement to slight it; but in the very instance, where such temptation or inducement is present, there they fail. For example; one man supposes, that if he attend to the higher duties of religion, he may, in the hour of mirth or season of thoughtlessness, indulge his appetites beyond the limits of moderation, and the line of Christian duty. Another thinks, that on account of some unusual provocation, he may give vent to anger and passion, or do things that are at variance with the exact rule of justice, equity, and righteousness. A

third believes, that if he live soberly and do justly, he may neglect the services of the sanctuary, and the reception of the means of grace, as often as what he supposes a fair excuse is at hand. And a fourth sets it down as an established truth, that if he serve God seriously in any way, he is at full liberty to choose his own way, and to be guided by his own judgment; and, therefore, need give himself no trouble to enquire what the will of the Lord is. There are many other cases, similar to these, which might be mentioned; But is not this to set the authority of Christ at nought? Is not this to form a religion for one's self? Is not this to adopt the religion of Christ, where it is agreeable and suited to convenience or interest or prejudice, and to reject it where it is not? How unwilling soever they who act thus, may be to acknowledge it, they must entertain the belief, that a partial disregard of some doctrine, precept, or institution of the Gospel, will have no effect in obstructing the narrow path of life. Thus, unwittingly it may be, but surely indeed, they disregard what Christ says concerning strict fidelity in every respect, and establish their creed, not on the everlasting truths of the Gospel, but on their own prejudiced notions, or the prevalent opinions of the multitude. They seem to conclude, that if they are faithful in some respects, they may

be negligent in others ; and thus forget, that they who *persevere* in offending in one point, are guilty of the whole law. Let us examine a little more narrowly into the principle, by which such men are guided. It seems to be this : they attempt to quiet their conscience, in regard to the particular point in which they transgress, by arguing themselves into the belief, that they are faithful in other respects, and that their error is but trifling, and proceeds from a good motive ; that God is merciful, and will overlook one mark of disrespect : that perhaps, after all, it is no real mark of disrespect : that there may be many ways of serving God, all equally proper : that the Marks by which the Old Paths may be known, is a matter not worth the trouble of investigation : that all Christians are holy, and consequently must belong to the one family of God : and that the less one thinks of such subjects the better. Thus, the spirit of disobedience is at work within them, and they know it not : they know their Lord's will, and they do it not : they are aware of the obligation which binds every Christian to prove all things, but they heed it not. So true is it, that whensoever men venture to parley with error, they are sure to become blind to the danger of such folly ; and, what is more, they will scarcely bear to be told of their fault. Now, although such may pretend

that they have faith in Christ, and regard for His religion, it is doubtful whether, correctly speaking, they have either. Faith in Christ includes respect for every thing that He taught and instituted; and regard for religion, means a readiness to forsake every worldly object, rather than deny the truth, or depart a single step from the narrow path which Christ pointed out. But for worldly objects, and from carnal motives, such as convenience, or interest, or prejudice, or father, or mother, or husband, or wife, or child, or houses, or lands; how many are there, who would never scruple to take liberties with their religious principles and duties; and, what is very strange, who would, when they have done so, maintain that they were as ardently attached to Christ, and had as strong faith in His merits, as before! Such may have been received into the Church in Baptism: they may have solemnly before God, and publicly in the congregation, confirmed their Baptismal covenant: they may have appeared regularly within the courts of God's house, and devoutly approached His holy altar; and there renewed their vows, and received the mystical pledges of Christ's redeeming love: and they may thus in the most solemn manner, and on the most important occasions, have professed their regard for Christ's sacred Ordinances, and their attachment to

His holy Church: and yet, on a slight change of worldly circumstances, they will break their covenant, renounce their profession, and forsake their Church; and still they will believe, that their faith in Christ, and their respect for His Ordinances, and their love for His Church, are neither shaken nor diminished. What to say of such conduct, I know not. It certainly betrays a disposition to lay the foundation of religious principle on what is *seen*, rather than on what ought to be *believed*. They who are guided by such a principle, look only at immediate consequences; and as they see no evil resulting from indifference about Evangelical truths and ordinances, they conclude that there is no danger. They seem to forget, that God must be equally great, equally glorious, whether we serve Him or not; that He does not demand our obedience on His own account, but on ours; and that our being permitted and instructed to serve Him, is a privilege, not a task. Forgetting these things, they conclude that God will be satisfied with any kind of service, that they may find it most convenient or agreeable to offer Him; and that they will obtain the graces of the Holy Spirit, through any means which they may think proper to adopt: whereas, they ought to remember, that in the religious, as well as in the natural economy, there is

doubtless so close and mysterious a connection between the appointed means and the proposed end, that the latter will never be properly attained, where the former are carelessly or habitually neglected. But because this can be perceived only by the eye of faith, those who are indifferent in regard to religious obligations, and divinely-appointed institutions, may suppose their respect for Christ and His Gospel to be great, but they are certainly deficient in true faith. They walk by sight, and reduce the efficacy of the Divine Ordinances to the standard of worldly experience. Their faith is not the faith of Abraham, who at the command of God went forth, not knowing whither he went^t, but fully believing that what God had promised, He was able also to perform^u. Thus, indifference is certainly nearly allied to infidelity, and lukewarmness is hateful to God^x. And although many may flatter themselves, that they have faith in Christ, and respect for His Ordinances; yet if they trust not in His promises, nor have recourse to the means of grace which He has appointed, nor abide in His mystical body, the Church, nor keep their vows, nor prefer His service above every worldly consideration; they are certainly deceiving themselves, and trifling in a case where

^t Heb. xi. 8.

^u Rom. iv. 21.

^x Rev. iii. 16.

seriousness alone is becoming. And yet this thoughtlessness, or folly, or whatever may be its name, has its origin, perhaps, in some motive which they would be ashamed to avow to the world, and almost glad to conceal from themselves. I candidly confess, that I have a much higher respect for the man who is serious in his religious creed, even although that creed be erroneous, than I have for him who is indifferent, whether he be right or wrong. The one errs through ignorance, the other through carelessness. The former, if better informed, would immediately yield to conviction: the latter would, in defiance of every argument, remain in his opinions, and go on in his course. The sincere Episcopalian, by his example, endeavours to recommend the truth to all men; and for this reason, he will never shew the least disrespect for any of the marks of the true Church, lest any should be misled by his example, and allured into danger through his fault. He is well aware of the fact, that there are thousands who pay little regard to the marks by which the true Church is distinguished, but the circumstance has little weight in his estimation. Its weight is more than counterbalanced by another fact, viz. that popular approbation has never been a sure criterion of the truth. The Author of our holy religion, did not enjoy the countenance of the

great majority of the Jews. They derided His doctrines, they slew Himself; and perhaps in no age has the Church of God been supported by the majority of mankind. Hence, in cases where the will of God is explicit, the Episcopalian pays no regard to public opinion. He sincerely regrets the stiffneckedness and folly of such as prefer their own fancies to the wisdom of God, and he would greatly rejoice were they to lay aside such folly; but while they do not, he cannot be guided by their example. It is to God, not to men, that he looks for the reward of his labours; and therefore his great rule of duty is to serve God, and honour His institutions, independent of the opinions or the practices of the world.

Q. But is it not a very general opinion, that if men live a good life, and that if their heart be upright, it will never be asked of them in the day of the Lord, where or how they worshipped?

A. Such an opinion is prevalent, but its value must depend entirely on what is understood by "an upright heart," and "a good life;" otherwise it must be very unsafe and dangerous, as a rule of duty. A single text of Scripture cannot be found to support the doctrine, that it will make no difference at the last, where or how men worship God, and seek the means of grace. If, therefore, such

notion be brought forward with the view of lessening men's respect for a single law or ordinance of our holy religion, it can be esteemed as nought but a vain imagination, fondly conceived by thoughtless or daring men, as an excuse for preferring their own ways to God's ways, or for setting aside the authority of the Most High, and following their own inclinations. From the fall of Adam to the present day, this has been the deceitful principle which has allured mortals into the greatest and most dangerous errors. THE BIBLE, and not the baseless conjectures of *presuming reason*, is the rule in which the faithful Episcopalian is disposed to put his trust. The heart cannot be right, which would prefer its own thoughts to God's thoughts. He whose heart is right with God, and under the influence of His Holy Spirt, will desire, above all things, to fulfil the will of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ; and so, to preserve peace and unity in His holy Church. Unity is the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit: division is the sign of His absence. The spirit of unity leads to submission: the spirit of division produces rebellion. But these are truths of which it would almost appear, that many of the present day have lost sight. They never seem to think, that *uprightness of heart*, and entire *submission to the Divine will*, and full *reliance on the means of*

Christ's appointment, are merely different expressions for one and the same thing. As little do they seem to know, that *the Spirit of God*, and *the spirit of division*, can never be made to dwell together. It is certainly the will of God, that all who profess to serve and worship Him, be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment^x:" and this single truth, were there none other, must be fatal to the popular notion, that the heart may be right and the life good, even in cases where the liberty is taken of serving God, or seeking His gracious aid, in a way more in compliance with popular notions and individual prejudices, than in obedience to His own holy laws and ordinances. But there are some who are wise above what is written. These conclude, that if they only attend faithfully to such parts of duty, as may be more agreeable or more convenient, their heart is upright and their life good: and that no questions will be asked at the last day, concerning those cases wherein they have been careless or disobedient. Let such beware, lest they be deceiving themselves, whilst they are thus reverencing the marks of truth only partially; in other words, whilst they are serving God, and obeying His holy will, in cases where there is no temptation or inducement to do otherwise. The heart cannot

x 1 Cor. i. 10.

be right which harbours such a spirit, nor the life good which is guided by such a principle. As a member of the Episcopal Church, I have ever been taught, that my heart cannot be upright nor my life good, unless in my conduct and conversation, I shew that I venerate all the *marks* of truth; venerate them, not partially but sincerely; venerate them, not only professedly, but also practically. I now see only as through a glass darkly, and know nothing of the efficacy of God's Word and Ordinances, further than He has been pleased to reveal. For example; I could not, by any process of reasoning, discover the connection between Baptism and spiritual life; and yet our blessed Lord distinctly conjoins this Sacrament with salvation^y: nor could I, as yet, say in what way the resurrection to eternal life depends on the reception of the holy Eucharist; and yet I am informed, that they who receive it not, have no life in them^z. So likewise I am told, that he who receiveth Christ's ambassadors, receiveth Himself^a; and that whosoever receiveth them not, nor heareth their words, shall be in a more miserable plight, in the day of judgment, than the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha^b;

^y St. Mark xvi. 16; St. John iii. 3; Gen. xvii. 14.

^z St. John vi. 53, 54.

^a St. John xiii. 20.

^b St. Matt. x. 15.

but how this should be so, I am, as yet, unable to tell. I therefore must conclude, that, during this the infancy of my existence, I am not able in any one case to say, what may be the advantages of full, or the dangers of partial obedience; and hence, in reference to things sacred, I must trust in God's word, and not venture to decide on my own judgment, concerning the final result of fidelity, or the contrary. In one sense, the Christian life, during our present state, is wrapt up in mystery^c. We cannot judge from what we see, but from what we believe. If we judge according to what is before our eyes, "there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked^d:" to him who devoutly joins in the services of the sanctuary, and to him who rarely takes any part therein: to him who regularly has recourse to the means of grace, and to him who despises them: to him who continues stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and to him who separates himself: to him who strives to be faithful in all things, and to him who makes his own convenience or prejudice the rule of his obedience. But these circumstances tend more fully to convince me, that I ought never to think my heart right, if it is not wholly disposed to give *full* obedience, as far as such is practicable; nor to believe my life to

^c Col. iii. 3.

^d Eccles. ix. 2.

be good, if it is not characterised by profound and entire regard for every law and ordinance of our God and Redeemer. I must duly respect the *word of God*, the *means of grace*, and the *Ministers of Christ*, if I would at last enjoy the *inheritance* which our blessed Lord has purchased for His faithful servants. This is the *spirit* which must animate *the heart that is right*; this the *principle* which must direct *the life that is good*.

Q. But still, is not the *heart* the seat of religion? in other words, is it not the heart that God requires?

A. Most unquestionably it is. THE LOVE OF GOD is the very principle of religion, without which, attention to laws and ordinances will be of little avail. But this principle, like *faith*, must produce *fruit*, otherwise it is useless. If we *love God*, we must *keep His commandments*. This is a rule unchangeably fixed^e. The heart is indeed the seat of religion: it is there that the very principle of religion must be found. But religion is not a baseless phantom—a vague and indefinite system. This is the notion of fanatics. But it is a system, embracing a true and reasonable service. Hence the revelation of Doctrines; the institution of Ordinances; the appointment of Ministers. Religion resembles the

^e Vide 1 John ii. throughout.

holy Sacraments. The inward and spiritual grace must be accompanied by outward and visible signs. The whole system of God's dealings with man, is on the principle, that what is inwardly felt must be outwardly expressed. None I suppose would deny, but that if it had so pleased God, He could have communicated His grace to us without the intervention of outward means, yet such are not His ways. His holy religion, therefore, although it has its seat in the heart, must be shewn in the faithful observance of all the Divine laws and ordinances. Without this, the religion of the heart is dead, being alone: without this, there may be systems of the wildest fanaticism, which men call religion, but there can be nothing more. We know that the soul is the only valuable part of man; yet, without the body, we know not how, in our present state, the soul could act: so, the principle of religion in the heart, that is, what is commonly called *vital religion*, is the only valuable part of the system; yet, without the framework of the Church—the doctrines, the sacraments, the prayers, the ministry—we know, or ought to know, that in our present state, the vital principle could not be exerted. “If ye love Me,” said our blessed Lord, “keep My commandments.” By forgetting this important precept, the world has been filled with superstition, fanaticism, innovations, and folly.

Q. What then do you consider to be the great advantage, or the urgent necessity, of seeking and asking for the Old Paths?

A. The numerous and strange innovations which have originated in various ages, are sufficient to convince any sober-minded Christian, of both the necessity and the advantage of continuing stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. The doctrines and institutions of the Gospel, differ from all others in this, that they are perfect, and adapted to the circumstances of every time and place. They are *Catholic verities*, and every attempt to improve or alter them, must inevitably deteriorate them. In the Church of God, that which was *first*, ought also to be that which is *last*. Of the doctrines and institutions of our blessed Lord, there should be no attempt at change or alteration. Whatsoever is added or taken away, whatsoever is altered or mutilated, must tend to deteriorate, not to improve^f. The truth will admit of no change. Now, let even those who are fondest of walking in *new paths* say, what has been the general result of such predilection; and the distracted state of the Christian world, the innumerable systems of doctrine and modes of worship, the bold speculations and general indifference, the endless variety of sects and parties, and the "envy-

^f Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

ing, strife, and divisions," which immediately rise up to view; will dictate such an account, as the sincere Christian must be ashamed to repeat, and grieved to contemplate. It is in the *Old Paths*, marked out by our Lord, trodden by His Apostles, and frequented by the faithful in the purest ages; in which I am told to seek for rest to my soul, and in which I am assured that I shall find it^g.

Q. But may not *newer* ways, equally good and equally safe, be found? In other words, may there not be many ways through this world, yet all leading directly to heaven?

A. When the people of the Lord marched through the wilderness, they were told of the rich inheritance that lay before them, but they were not permitted to take the way thither, which might have appeared to themselves as the best and shortest. They were to pursue that one rout, which God Himself pointed out, and not impiously to suppose that others nearer or better might be found. Nearer roads they might have found, but in these, will any one venture to say, that the presence of the Lord would have directed their steps; or that, by them, they would have found ready access to the promised land? In like manner, we know of our inheritance only by report, the report of Him who has purchased it for

^g Jer. vi. 16.

us; and we must submit to be proved, and to be led thither in the way of God's appointment, and not in that, which, to ourselves, might appear shorter or better. We cannot even tell why it should be necessary to try us at all, nor can we say what the particular purpose of many temptations, to which we are exposed, may be; but this we know, that every one is to be made perfect through sufferings of some kind^h, and his fidelity put to the test, by trials of some description. Under such circumstances, strict adherence to the path in which God leads us on, is the only safe course. If there are nearer or easier roads to heaven, it is doubtful whether the Divine Presence watch over them. But that there are any such paths, is merely matter of unauthorized conjecture. Our blessed Lord speaks of only one way, and this He describes as both narrow and strait. Our whole Christian course is just as mysterious as that of the Israelites through the wilderness. We must follow the path which the Lord points out, and not venture into bye-ways of our own choosing; for, although new ways may appear plain and safe, it is only in the old narrow path, where we are assured of finding rest for our souls. Ways of men's choosing may, peradventure, lead to heaven, but of this we have no assurance: that narrow path, for

^h Heb. ii. 10; 1 Pet iv. 13.

which we are commanded to ask, and in which we are advised to walk, is that alone with which any sure promise is connected. Every doctrine and ordinance of our blessed Lord and His holy Apostles, must, on this account, command the utmost respect of all who are willing to be led onward by the Spirit of God, through this wilderness of probation, to that glorious inheritance which is promised to the faithful. Thus, I cannot listen to the common saying that "there are many paths to heaven:" the word of God speaks but of one: and although this may turn and wind in directions contrary to what some might suppose to be the best, yet I have full confidence in Him who leads the way; and, therefore, how mysterious soever it may be; how humiliating soever to presuming reason; how contrary soever to popular opinion; how condemnatory soever of prevalent practice; this one way of God, narrow and strait though it be, is that which I must prefer as safer and surer than any of the thousand ways of human device. To those who prefer these ways, I can have nothing to object; but I dare not go along with them: I dare not trust myself to these new paths, crowded though they be. Glad shall I be, yea, sincerely glad, if they lead to heaven; and in charity I am bound to hope, that they may do so; but, as an Episcopalian, I must venerate "the Old

Paths, where is the Good Way;" paths distinctly known by the unchanging and unchangeable *marks* of truth. *The pillar of THE LORD* conducted His people through the desert: "*the pillar of THE TRUTH*ⁱ," will still lead on the hosts of God to their home and their inheritance.

Q. But it is a prevalent opinion, that the sacred Scriptures contain no specific rules concerning the exact form in which the Church of Christ is to be built; is there then not a latitude given to individuals, or sects, to rear up the spiritual building according to any plan most suited to their own fancy, or to the circumstances amid which they may chance to be placed?

A. Such an opinion cannot be entertained for a single moment by one, who has right notions of the Divine word. If men take the *whole* word of God as their guide, and not impiously tear asunder the Old and the New Testaments, they will find no difficulty in determining the exact form and constitution of the Church of God. In the Old Testament, the ground is clearly marked out, and the boundary distinctly defined. The statutes—the offerings—the sacrifices—the Priesthood, in its three-fold order—are all appointed, appointed by an ordinance for ever. On the foundation thus defined,

ⁱ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

our blessed Lord erected His Church. In many respects, the types of the law were fulfilled in Christ, and therefore its ceremonies were discontinued; but the doctrines and laws of the typical economy, in every tittle—the Sacraments no longer typical, but commemorative; the Priesthood, changed from the house of Aaron, but still preserved in its true character—were each and all continued in the Church. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and His Church, since its foundations were laid on the Rock of Ages, has undergone no greater change than from the shadow to the reality. The self-same events that were prefigured under the former dispensation, are commemorated under the latter and more perfect economy. It is therefore false to say, that there are no specific rules in the sacred Record, concerning the *exact* form and constitution of the Church of God. The BIBLE, even the *whole* BIBLE, is the great depository of theology and Ecclesiastical history; and to this, in its true and catholic sense, the Episcopalian has recourse, when he makes inquiry concerning the foundation of the system of doctrine, the means of grace, and the constitution of the Church, which he ought to venerate and support. He does not feel himself at liberty to do, as many do, appeal to the BIBLE; and then, when the BIBLE is taken as the rule, object to such parts of it as are

hostile to peculiar notions, and newly-invented systems, and rashly assert, that what God revealed concerning His Church, under the Mosaic economy, has little or nothing to do with its constitution, doctrines, and ordinances, under the Christian dispensation. But "God is not a man, that He should lie;" and the faithful member of His Church, cannot venture to imitate those who thus foolishly attempt to mould the everlasting word of God, to the form of their own crude inventions, and boldly endeavour to support their cause, by inducing men to believe that the older Testament may be thrown away. They who are at liberty to appeal to the *whole* of the sacred Record, will not be surprised that the Apostles do not give a definite outline of the foundations of the Church. This had been done by Moses. Our Lord carefully instructed His Apostles concerning the things which pertained to His Church; and, by His example, shewed them how the sacred edifice was to be reared. This Church they established whithersoever they went; and, it ought to be remembered, that their writings were not intended to instruct men concerning the form in which the sacred edifice was to be built, but to admonish them to abide in the communion of that Church, whose foundations had been laid, or to reprove them for interfering with its already established doctrines and

economy. The Apostles and their successors, to the end of time, are the builders of the Church^k. The outline of the building is clearly defined in the Old Testament, and directions for its greater extent are contained in the New. Hence the rule to be observed by the faithful builder, is in these words: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth upon the foundation already laid; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ^l." The Apostolic epistles, therefore, speak not of the foundation, but of the danger of separating from that Church which was already established^m, or, of the duty of adhering to the "One body," and the "One faith," into which they had already been admitted by "One baptismⁿ." The word of God, therefore, gives no latitude to individuals or sects, who have not the Redeemer's commission, to constitute themselves into builders of His Church. No man has an inherent power to lay a single stone in the spiritual building; in other words, no man can, on his own authority, introduce a single child of fallen Adam, into the holy family of God. The Son of God, alone, can do this, and they to whom He has delegated His power. Individuals or sects may, like the men of Shinar, rear up buildings according to any plan most agreeable

^k Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c.

^m St. Jude ii. &c.

^l 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c.

ⁿ Eph. iv. 4, &c.

to their fancies, and, as nearly as possible, resembling the temple of the Lord ; but the temple of the Lord they cannot be, unless the builders humbly consent to receive His *commission*, and to act as His servants ; obeying His *will*, and revering the *means* which He has appointed for the accomplishment of the work. The member of the Holy Catholic Church, has recourse to the word of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, and he finds ample information concerning both the outline of the Church, and the way in which it is to be built.

Q. But do not Episcopalians appeal to Tradition ; that is, to the authority of the Fathers, as well as to the word of God ?

A. They appeal to Tradition, or primitive authority, only in subserviency to the word of God. At a very early period of Ecclesiastical history, it was settled by those who were competent judges, that the canon of sacred Scripture, contained the sum and substance of all that our blessed Lord and His holy Apostles, taught and required to be believed. Aware of this, the members of the Protestant branches of the Catholic Church firmly believe, and resolutely maintain, that “ Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation ; so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed

as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation °." By Tradition, therefore, Episcopalians mean the written and concurrent testimony of the Fathers, in elucidation and defence of Scriptural doctrines and ordinances. In order to prevent misapprehension or misconstruction of my meaning, I have further to state, that it is only such parts of the writings of the Fathers, as have this reference to Evangelical faith and practice, that are esteemed by Episcopalians as the traditions of the Church^p. The writings of the Fathers may contain many *opinions* which have no reference to Apostolical doctrine or fellowship: but such opinions are held to have no more weight than the opinions of individuals: they are not the voice of the Church, declaring the everlasting truths of the Gospel; or, it may be, that the writings of some of the Fathers contain opinions, calculated rather to abrogate, than to establish, the doctrines of our Lord and His Apostles, and to encourage new and strange practices, rather than to guard the primitive ordinances and institutions of the Gospel. In such cases, the Episcopalian rejects the authority of the Fathers, and looks on their opinions as vain or heretical. Independent of the scriptures of the Old and New Testa-

Art. VI.

^p Vide Preface to the Confessions of S. Augustine, by Dr. Pusey.

ment, the writings of the Fathers can have neither weight nor authority in matters of faith. The voice of the Church, must always be in unison with the voice of Revelation. Hence, the traditions of the Fathers can be of no authority, further than they are calculated to establish the doctrines, preserve the ordinances, and defend the government, of Christ's Church, as originally and authoritatively established. The members of the Church, therefore, appeal to the authority of the Fathers, not as a *rule of faith*, but as *evidence of the truth*: not as the *foundation* on which a single doctrine is to be built, but as *means* by which the doctrines and practices of our blessed Lord, and His holy Apostles, may be clearly understood, and fully established. THE WORD OF GOD is *the Law*; the Fathers are the WITNESSES, or TEACHERS, of *the Law*. They have no authority either to add, or to take away. Their part is, to preserve and defend. When the word of God is liable to misconstruction, the Fathers enable us to fix its meaning; where it is not fully expressed, they act the part of expositors. The sacred Scriptures are supreme in matters of faith; and the great object of the faithful Christian is, to ascertain what they really teach and command. Hence, the appeal to the writings of the primitive Fathers, and the decisions of the earliest Councils, in cases where the

full and correct meaning of the Divine word is in danger of being misunderstood, or misinterpreted. Thus the *testimony* of the Fathers is cited in *elucidation*, or in *defence*, of DIVINE TRUTH; whilst, on the other hand, the *Divine Word* is the *test* by which such testimony is now to be appreciated; for if the evidence of any writer be at variance with the letter, or with the spirit of revealed truth, it is at once rejected as useless or heretical. The advantage which the Churchman derives from such an appeal to primitive authority, as has now been stated, must be obvious to all who reflect, on the one hand, on the extreme importance of a sound faith, and a right knowledge of those doctrines which Christ revealed, and those ordinances which He instituted; and who, on the other hand, glance at the history of former ages, or at the present state of the religious world. How many heretical doctrines have been broached since the days of the Apostles! How many superstitious practices have prevailed! How many systems of faith are even now to be found! How many modes of worship! How many strange notions concerning the means of grace! How many concerning the constitution of the Christian Church! And yet, amid all this variety and confusion and folly, have not the authors and abettors of the most erroneous and heretical notions, always endeavoured to sup-

port their cause, by an appeal to some passage of the word of God, which they have misunderstood, or misinterpreted? In such cases, how is the Truth to be vindicated? how is the full and correct meaning of the sacred Record to be determined^a? Only by shewing, that such doctrines and practices were not *first* in the Church, but of later invention: and this can be done only, by an appeal to the testimony of those who more immediately derived their instruction from the inspired authors of the sacred volume, and who, in all ages, have been considered as the faithful witnesses and teachers of Divine truth. Nor is there any risk of giving undue weight to traditional evidence; since no doctrine, nor precept, that is not contained in the Holy Scriptures, or may be proved thereby, can be established on the authority of the Fathers. They are only the WITNESSES of what was held to be Divine truth and Apostolical practice in their day, and can never be the AUTHORS of a single doctrine or institution connected with our most holy faith. There has been a rule, well known in the Church since the second century. It is this: "What is *first* is TRUE; what is *subsequent* is ADULTERATED^r."

^a Vide "Appendix to The Rule of Faith," by the Rev. H. E. Manning, and particularly chap. iv.

^r Tertul. adv. Prax. sec. 11.

The great truths contained in the SACRED SCRIPTURES, were *first* in the Church; and the *written Traditions* of the Church, are the *means* by which all the truths contained in the canon of Scripture, and all the sacred institutions mentioned in the inspired volume, are preserved pure and entire, as they were taught and established by the Apostles, and received and maintained by their more immediate disciples. The Traditions of the Church Catholic, which are of any value, are, therefore, only such as “be not repugnant to the word of God:” only such as tend to establish, in their true and original character, the doctrines and institutions of our blessed Lord: only such as embrace those sacred and evangelical truths, which, according to the rule of Vincent of Lerins, have been believed *every where, always, and by all the faithful*. It is thus that perfect UNITY is preserved: thus that what was *first*, is maintained: thus that what is *subsequent*, is rejected. Tertullian, in the second century, writes thus on this very subject: “Thenceforward, every doctrine which accords with those Apostolic Churches—the wombs and originals of faith—should be reputed for truth: and that is without doubt to be holden, which the Churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; but every doctrine

is to be prejudged of falsehood which pretends to be wise against the truth of the Churches, and of the Apostles, and Christ, and God^s." On the one hand then, Tradition, thus rightly understood, enables the members of the Church to embrace what was *first*, and therefore *true*: it fosters in them a profound regard for the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and enables them to ascertain the full and correct meaning of passages, where allusion merely is made to Apostolical practices. For example; it enables them to understand what is meant when it is said, that the Apostles prayed to God "with one accord:" and that they baptized whole households: and that no man has a right to preach except he be sent: and that St. Paul, assisted by the Presbytery, ordained Timothy and Titus: and that there were in the Church, first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers: and that from the earliest days of Christianity, the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, was hallowed as the Lord's day: and that, not merely all the males, but all confirmed Christians, without distinction of sex, were admitted to the holy Altar. These, and similar passages, relate to circumstances which must have been well understood in the Church at the time when the inspired Record was penned; but

* De Præsc. Hæret. sec. 21.

which are not expressed so definitely as to preclude misconstruction. Hence, for further information concerning such passages, we look into the writings of the Fathers, obtain the necessary information, and revere the will of God. On the other hand, the writings of the Fathers enable us to reject what is *subsequent*, and therefore *adulterated*: to separate, by a broad line of distinction, *the sacred Word of God*, from the *apocryphal writings* of uninspired men: to reject the errors of early heretics, such as the Gnostics, Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Socinus: to protest against Papal usurpation, and purify the Church of the strange doctrines and superstitious practices, which had crept into her courts during the middle ages; and to oppose and avoid the numberless innovations and impieties of more modern times, when multitudes, in their zeal for reforming the Church, have not scrupled to lay unhallowed hands on the original fabric; and, in its stead, to rear up edifices of strange and novel structure. But after all, it will probably be said, that the examination of those written records, by which we are to ascertain the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures, is a task which none but those who have great learning, and much leisure, can accomplish; in other words, that Catholic Tradition is a source of information open only to a few learned and wealthy men, but shut to

the great mass of professing Christians. In one sense, this is the case, and, at first sight, it may appear as if there were no remedy. But there is a remedy; and fortunately such a remedy, as every member of the Church may, without much trouble or exertion, make available to his advantage. It is this; At the time of the Reformation, the pious and learned men, who undertook and accomplished that great work, considered the revealed word of God, contained in the Old and New Testaments, as *the great charter* of our faith; and they declared that the Holy Scriptures contained all truth necessary to salvation. But in order to ascertain the true and full meaning of the sacred Record, these holy men carefully and patiently examined every ancient record and document, which bore on the subject. Nor was this all; they embodied the fruits of their labours in the several Formularies and Offices which make up the Book of Common Prayer. The Prayer Book was not an invention, nor even a composition, of the Reformers; nor was it written at random; nor was it the work of one or two individuals; but it was a compilation, carefully and faithfully gathered from the primitive Liturgies, and the writings of the early Christian Fathers, by those eminent and pious men, to whom we are indebted for the Reformation. In the Liturgy, the Creeds

and Collects, the offices for Baptism and the Holy Communion, the Catechism, and other Offices, the Ordinal and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, we have a full and complete commentary, shewing in the clearest and most distinct manner, what the primitive Christians believed and taught, as the doctrines of Revelation. The Reformers further enable us to determine the system of divinity which the early Christians taught as deducible from the written record of God's word; for, from the ancient Liturgies, they so arranged the course of Services for the year, that in them is delineated the grand scheme of human redemption in all its essential features, whilst the true and catholic meaning of the Word of God, is so fixed in regard to every part of this mighty plan, that the faithful member of the Church can scarcely put a private or erroneous interpretation on any portion of the divine Record. Thus the member of the Church has, in his Prayer Book, all the information concerning the meaning attached to God's holy word by the early Christians, that the Anglican Reformers, by profound learning and patient research, could discover. They examined the ancient Liturgies, Creeds, Decrees of Councils, and writings of individuals: he, therefore, who makes himself acquainted with the Liturgy^t, Creeds,

^t N.B. The Scotch Communion Office embodies the doctrine of

Formularies, and Articles, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, is very well prepared to read the Bible, as it has always been understood and interpreted by those, who continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. The learned are still expected to examine the original records of the primitive Church, and to ascertain the fulness of the evidence extant, for every doctrine deduced from sacred Scripture ; but those who have neither time nor acquirements for such investigation, have only to lean on *the whole host of Anglican Reformers*—men who went to the stake in defence of the principles which they embodied in the Book of Prayer, and as witnesses of the true faith which they had so fully proved. Safely, then, may every member of the Church trust to the evidence of such pious and learned men, and be content to throw in his lot with theirs. They faithfully proved all things ; and they laid down their lives rather than relinquish what was good. Thus the Church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, supplies a rule by which even the most unlearned of her members may be able to read and interpret the Bible, in all essential points, as it was read and interpreted by the immediate disciples of our Lord and His Apostles, and by the faithful in all

Scripture as interpreted by the Primitive Church, more fully than the English Office, as it now stands.

ages. Nor does this Catholic tradition of the true meaning of Scripture, give the least encouragement to the groundless notion, that HOLY SCRIPTURES contain *only part* of the revealed counsel of God, and that *other essential truths* have come down on the stream of *oral, or unwritten Tradition*, and may, at any fit time, be embodied into the Christian creed, by the chief rulers of the Church. Of this oral, or unwritten Tradition, something shall immediately be said. In the meantime, let it be remembered, that the *written* records, or Traditions of the Catholic Church, as they merely teach and preserve the true meaning of the *sacred Scriptures*, can never be at variance with these, nor give rise to the necessity of new and strange interpretations of parts of the written record of God's will, in order to reconcile it with pretended unwritten traditions. The Book of Common Prayer, will not be found, in any of its Offices, Creeds, or Formularies, to jar in the least with the written record of the Divine counsel. It merely fixes the primitive interpretation which was given to all parts of the written word embodying essential doctrines. There is a species of TRADITION, termed *unwritten, or oral*; but as there is no security of this being always agreeable to the word of God, but rather great reason to dread, that its tendency is to weaken, if not to set aside, the authority

of the sacred Record in its primitive and true meaning; the Protestant Episcopal Church, not only utterly rejects the authority of such vague tradition, but even refuses to recognize its existence.

Q. But are there not many good men, whose lives adorn the Christian character, belonging to various religious societies and communities, apart from the Episcopal Church; why should you hesitate to cast in your lot among these?

A. There are certainly many, whose moral worth and integrity, are obvious to all; whose piety and zeal are ardent and laudable; and whose amiable and Christian-like virtues are numerous, and deserving of my highest esteem and closest imitation. But still, I could not join the religious communities to which they belong. I find, speaking as men speak, that there are good and bad men among all sects and denominations; and our blessed Lord has explicitly told us, that even in His holy Church, there are tares as well as wheat; bad fishes as well as good. It is not, therefore, by the conduct of erring men, that I am to judge of the Church of God, but by the everlasting marks of truth which it exhibits. I admire, and am bound to imitate, virtue in every man, be his religious creed what it may; I find traits of character even in Turks and savages, which might well put many who profess Christianity

to the blush ; but I should not, on this account, be justified in slighting the superior knowledge which I possess, to that enjoyed by Turks and Indians. The word of God, and not the conduct of man, is the rule by which I ought to be guided, when searching for the Old Paths, and proving all things. I am willing to believe that they, who are not members of the Church Catholic, but whose lives are adorned with many Christian virtues, and whose sincerity is proved by their practice, are faithful to the extent of their knowledge. I conclude that, as they are faithful over a few things, they would, if not deterred by circumstances, such as a proper opportunity of investigating those points wherein they err, early prejudices, or the influence of popular opinion, be faithful over many things ; and, therefore, that if they enjoyed the same advantages as I do, they would venerate those parts of Christian faith and practice, which they now lightly esteem, or wholly despise. Hence, their fidelity according to their creed, is a constant admonition to me to be faithful to the full extent of my knowledge^u : and thus, the very thing that I admire in their conduct, would be a blemish in mine, were I to join myself to their Communion. They are faithful to the will of God, as far as they have been taught, and, without inquiring whether

^u St. Luke xii. 48.

they are to blame for not knowing more, I am aware, that if their praise would be mine, I must be faithful in proportion to what I know. If in any virtue they are superior to me, I am to study the will of God more thoroughly, in reference to such excellence, lest I be behind them in the knowledge of some important truth, and in the respect due to it as part of divine Revelation. No one ought to be satisfied with an imperfect system of religious faith and practice. In this, as in every thing else, the rule of Christian duty is, "Be ye perfect^x." The constant aim of the Christian must be, to come behind in no gift; to be deficient in no act of holy obedience. Whilst therefore I, as one anxious to be a faithful disciple in all things, could not consent to cast in my lot with those who do not venerate all the marks by which Christ's Church is distinguished, how much soever their conduct in other respects may be praiseworthy; yet I am bound to admire and imitate them in all things, wherein they revere the will of God, and submit to His ordinances. If, in any degree, their fidelity convey an admonition to me; mine, in all things that I know and believe, ought also to be an example to them. I am bound by my principles, as a member of the Church, to supply every defect, and to correct every error, which may

^x St. Matt. v. 48.

be pointed out in the system of faith and practice, that I have embraced; but I can never consent to join with those who are obviously unacquainted with the value and importance of some of the marks of truth, that I have been taught to venerate; or, who unreasonably reject any thing of doctrinal or practical obligation, that may be proved to have the sanction of the very highest authority.

Q. But can it be supposed, that God would suffer so many to be deceived in regard to these matters, if they were really of such importance as you believe?

A. We ought to speak of God's ways with extreme caution, and always to have in remembrance the words of the Preacher; "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore, let thy words be few^y." We cannot trace the ways of God: His footsteps are not known. But from what has been clearly revealed to us, we may confidently assert, that God's ways are equal, and that He never leaves the truth without a witness, until men have filled up the cup of their iniquity to the very brim. God does not force men to embrace the truth, although He causes the light to shine, until they who love darkness

^y Eccles. v. 2.

rather than light, completely shut their eyes against it. Many "despise the riches of His goodness and longsuffering:" many, by their perverseness, tempt God to give them over to their own vile affections²: many of the nations of the earth, containing millions upon millions of human beings, are, at this very moment, ignorant of the truth, and of the true God. Bold, however, would the man be, who would lay the blame upon God. That He has never left the truth without a witness, but that men have ever been backward to receive it, is most certain. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, among men whose thoughts were only evil continually. Lot was a witness for the truth, in the midst of the cities of the plain. Abraham made the neighbouring kings acquainted with the true God. The Israelites were a light to the nations that were round about them: and their very captivities, which were a punishment upon themselves, were made the means of causing the name of the God of heaven to be respected throughout the most extensive empires. In the Christian world, there have always been witnesses for the truth, even in seasons of the greatest defection: and, among the heathen, the glad tidings of the Gospel have been proclaimed, probably more extensively than we are aware of. Now, although

² Rom. i. 24, &c.

error has prevailed to a grievous extent in all ages, and although the great mass of mankind has declined into iniquitous paths, yet let not God be blamed for this. "Lo, this only have I found," said the Preacher, "that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions^a." The Light shines, and the Law is revealed: men are therefore to blame for their blindness, as well as for their transgressions. But, withdrawing my eye from a general survey of the world, and confining it to my own country, and my own land^b, I perceive, that the taper of truth, although occasionally dimmed, has never been extinguished; and that although its flame may be weak, yet it is pure and steady. Still, under such circumstances, there is a probability that few only will consent to be guided by its light. To change the metaphor: men expect to hear the voice of God, in the great and strong wind which rends the mountains, and breaks in pieces the rocks; but it is not there: or amid the tumult of the earthquake; but it is not there: or issuing from the devouring flame; but it is not there: it is "a still small voice," and, therefore, they heed it not. But let them beware of insinuating, that the truth has been left without a witness, lest, peradventure, that very witness be amongst them. In former times,

^a Eccles. vii. 29.

^b Scotland.

how few listened to the servants of God ! How many disregarded even His own glory, when manifested in the wilderness ! How many forsook the worship of His temple, even when His glory rested visibly between the cherubim ! When His only Son appeared in the world, few listened to Him—many despised Him. In later times, many have tempted God to remove the light ; yea, the very Candlestick from amongst them : and even in the present day, and in countries where the light of His truth shines brightest, many refuse to listen to His words, or to be guided by His instruction. But amid all this stiffneckedness and apostacy, the truth has not been left without a witness, how unworthy soever of such favour men have proved themselves to be. The witness is not such as they expect, and therefore they reject it. Many expect signs and wonders, when nought beyond the ordinary dispensation of Providence is necessary. Many suppose that religion should be a noisy thing ; whereas the bride of the Lamb is a pure and modest virgin, whose voice is never heard in the streets, and whose raiment is of needlework^c. A pure, though slender branch of the Church, is still in the land. It is not, then, that God has left the truth without a witness ; but that the still small voice of this witness, is

^c Psalm xlv. 14.

drowned in the shout of the multitude. The voice of truth may still be heard, if men will only consent to listen: its taper may still be seen, if they will only submit to be guided by its rays.

Q. But are there not many striking instances to prove, that the blessing of God is poured out upon the labours of those who reject some of those marks, which, you say, distinguish the true Church?

A. This I will neither dispute, nor deny. To all appearance, and in very truth, the blessing of God may accompany the labours of such as you mention. But whether this be so, or not, is not what concerns us. It is not with what *God can do*; but with what He has *commanded us* to do; that we have any concern. God has appointed *means* through which He has graciously promised to convey to us His *blessings*: we, as faithful and obedient servants, are bound to seek His blessing through the appointed means. He may, in certain cases, if He think proper, bestow His blessings, independent of the instituted means; but it would be impious in us to neglect the means, and yet expect the blessing. He can work by miracle, but we are not to reject the ordinary means, and expect that He will miraculously interpose to save us. He may give salvation to many among the heathen, who know neither His name, nor His laws: He may, in some cases, pour

out His blessing on the labours of those who despise His means. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts, our thoughts. He can bring good out of evil. But granting all that you allege in this case, yet I would not forget that there may be danger in trusting too much to appearances. Success may be claimed by those who despise some of the divinely-instituted means of grace. But if so, may not these be the men of whom our blessed Lord has told us to beware, and warned us, that, through their success, they shall be enabled almost to deceive the very elect? They will speak in Christ's name, and in His name do many wonderful works, and yet may be prophets whom the faithful Christian ought not to follow. They may even be the means of bringing down a blessing on the heads of those who have no other way of becoming acquainted with the truth, and who humbly embrace all that they are taught; and yet the teachers, on account of their own conduct in rejecting such parts of the truth as are not consistent with their prejudices, may be in the state of a castaway. I cannot, therefore, think lightly of any of the marks of truth, because success may apparently crown the labours of some who despise them. Were temporary success to be made the criterion of truth, very heretical doctrines and unscriptural systems, would command our respect.

Many things which, to human eyes, appear for a time to be blessings, may, in the end, turn out to be the germs of the greatest curses. In matters affecting the religion and Church of Christ, we are not to judge of effects from the experience of a few years. It may be a life-time, it may be centuries, before the real tendency of such measures is fully developed. In disseminating the truths of the Gospel, and dispensing the means of grace, the only method of whose tendency we can entertain no doubt, is that which our blessed Lord instituted, and His holy Apostles established. All others are dangerous.

Q. But, after all, is it not very wonderful, nay, almost unaccountable, that such strong and general prejudice should exist among Scotchmen against the Protestant Episcopal Church, if its character be really so pure, and its claims so well established, as you say?

A. The existence of such prejudice is neither very wonderful, nor unaccountable. The great majority of Scotchmen do not understand the claims of the Church, nor know any thing of its character. They have been accustomed, from their youth up, to look upon it with suspicion, and, perhaps, with a kind of abhorrence; and have been discouraged, rather than otherwise, from examining into its history, or investigating the foundations of either its

principles, or its practices. Even their prejudices have been strongly excited against it; for, in many ways, they have been taught to esteem every thing connected with it, as closely allied to Popery, and rankly savouring of superstition. Believing this to be the case, they give themselves no further trouble about the matter, unless it be occasionally to raise a cry against Episcopacy, and Episcopalians. Hence it is, that from many, of whom other things might reasonably have been expected, the Episcopal Church meets with raillery instead of reason, and its principles with abuse, instead of patient investigation. It may fearlessly be asserted, that the great majority of Scotchmen are, at the present moment, totally ignorant of the claims and principles of what, at no very distant period, was the Church of their fathers. Many do not even know this, nor believe that it is any thing else, than an insignificant and modern sect, holding strange doctrines, and following superstitious practices. Many, on the other hand, would appear to think, that *establishment* was all that is necessary to give a claim to any denomination; and that without this, the most pure and primitive portion of the Church in the world, is undeserving of the least regard, or the slightest countenance. It is, therefore, not very wonderful, that the majority of the Scotch feel little interest in

favour of the Episcopal Church. That they should be strongly prejudiced against it, is perhaps wonderful, but by no means unaccountable. They have been taught to abhor it as Popish, and are perhaps, in some measure, laid under an obligation to root it out. But in spite of these things, in spite of some occurrences which might lead to a different conclusion, it is to be believed, that such unfounded notions and hostile feelings, are fast passing away. If misrepresentation and abuse do partially continue, such may be meant to try the faith, and exercise the patience, of the members of the Church, and therefore are to be endured with humble submission, and without a murmur. But from the increased, and daily increasing attention, which is paid to the doctrines, worship, constitution, and general principles, of the Church, it is to be hoped that, under the gracious direction of Divine Providence, the time is not very far distant, when unreasonable opposition will cease, and a fair hearing be obtained; so that the cause of the Episcopal Church, will be judged according to its real merits. This is all that the most ardent friends of the Church, either wish for or desire. They would have no one to support her cause, till he has made himself acquainted with her character; nor to be a member of her Communion, on the ground either of ignorance or of prejudice.

Q. Are not the principles of the Protestant Episcopal Church hostile to the right of private judgment?

A. To the full extent to which private judgment is either safe or right, the principles of the Church, instead of being hostile, are highly favourable. For example; the Church does not barely permit, but imperatively commands, her members to "stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way:" and strictly enjoins them, to "prove all things." The Church is built upon the Rock of Ages; her foundations are upon the holy hills; she is all glorious within: hence, the more thoroughly her members are acquainted with her strength and her beauty, the more fully will they be assured of their safety, whilst within her courts, instructed by her voice, and nourished by her care. It is not on the ground of ignorance, but of full knowledge; nor of prejudice, but of entire conviction; that the Church wishes any one to adhere to her Communion. But thus invited to embrace all her heavenly doctrines, and to revere all her sacred ordinances; the humble inquirer after Divine truth, will soon find himself compelled, with the Ethiopian eunuch, to exclaim, "How can I understand these things, except some man should guide me^d?" In the sacred writings, we

^d Acts viii. 38.

know that there are many "things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest unto their own destruction^e:" some things which are of great importance to be known, but which are barely mentioned in the sacred Record. Let the slightest inquiry be made, and both the history of former times, and the state of the Christian world at the present day, must satisfy the most sceptical, that heresies, and schisms, and superstitions, and innovations, of endless variety, have originated in partial and unauthorized interpretations of Holy Scripture. How, then, is the sincere inquirer after truth to act? Is he to trust to his own judgment in this difficult and important case; or, what is he to do? Let us inquire whether the sacred Scriptures themselves, contain any information, in regard to the matter. We have the fullest knowledge that our blessed Lord, before His Passion, was constantly instructing the twelve, concerning the great truths of the Gospel. To others He often spoke in parables; but to the Apostles He explained all things. To the eleven also, He shewed Himself alive after His Passion, by many infallible proofs, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God^f." At this time we are assured, that "He opened their understanding that

^e 2 Pet. iii. 16.

^f Acts i. 3.

they might understand the Scriptures^g;" and not only so, but He told them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endowed with power from on high; that is, till the Comforter, who had been promised, and who was to teach them all things, should come. Having thus prepared His Apostles for the great work of teaching all nations, beginning at Jerusalem^h, our Lord gave them a commission in these terms: "Go ye, therefore, and *teach* all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; *teaching them* to observe *all things* whatsoever *I have commanded you*ⁱ." In reference to the obligation on men to listen to the teaching of these His ambassadors, our Lord's words are not less remarkable; "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me^k." Turning our attention to the Apostles, we find, that in transmitting our Lord's commission to the next generation, they gave directions similar to those which they had received. Thus St. Paul enjoins Timothy in these terms: "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, **KEEP** by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us." "I charge

^g St. Luke xxiv. 45.

^h St. Luke xxiv. 47.

ⁱ St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

^k St. John xiii. 20.

thee therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the word." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto THE DOCTRINE; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." To Titus, St. Paul gives a similar charge: "Speak thou," said he, "the things which become sound doctrine." In reference to those who were to hear the word at the mouth of the commissioned ambassadors of Christ, the injunction is: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith, follow." "Obey them, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account¹." From this it plainly appears, that our blessed Lord does not mean every man to teach himself, nor, in things hard to be understood, to set up his own private judgment as an infallible guide. The whole tenor of Scripture shews, that every man is to be taught by those whom our blessed Lord has appointed to preach His name among all nations. But whilst the strongest injunctions are laid on the commissioned servants of Christ to continue in the doctrine, and to teach only what Christ has commanded; and on those whom they teach, to listen to them as they would to our Lord Himself; yet it plainly appears, that every Christian is not only at

¹ Heb. xiii. 7. 17.

liberty, but even bound in duty, to search the Scriptures daily, whether the things that are taught, really are so^m; and not only this, but if Christians find any one, even were he an angel from heavenⁿ, preaching any other doctrine than that which the sacred Scriptures contain, from such they are to withdraw themselves^o. Thus “the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth^p,” and her duly authorized Ministers are the teachers, by whom the world is to be made acquainted with the truths of the Gospel. But as some of these teachers have not been faithful; and as some have run, without being sent; and as it is the Christian’s duty to turn away from such; it again becomes a question, how the humble inquirer after truth is to know whom he is to trust as a guide and instructor. A false teacher may appear, and make the word of God subservient to the most dangerous doctrines and practices; and it is well known, that the world is filled with discordant doctrines, and diverse practices. Under such circumstances, there is only one sure rule: a rule, hated indeed, and abused by all who would wish to exalt their own private opinions above the eternal truths and ordinances, revealed and instituted by our Lord, and established and maintained by His

^m Acts xvii. 11.

ⁿ Gal. i. 8, 9.

^o 1 Tim. vi. 3, 5.

^p 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Apostles; but a rule, received and revered by all who are sincerely disposed to consider the will of God as supreme, and the doctrines and ordinances of His only Son, as alone deserving of esteem and veneration. The rule is this:—the TESTIMONY of the Apostles, in the first place; and in suberviency to this, of their successors, immediate and remote, who have *ever* been esteemed the teachers and defenders of Evangelical doctrine and practice in their true and primitive acceptation; is the means by which the true meaning of such portions of Scripture as are liable to misconstruction, is to be determined, and by which those Ordinances, instituted by our Lord, and established by His Apostles, are to be discovered and preserved. But the voice of the Apostles and their faithful successors, is the voice of the Church. It is in this, its orthodox and primitive sense, that the Church, as the ground and pillar of the truth, is to maintain and teach every doctrine and every ordinance of the Gospel^a: and in this, their true sense, she teaches the doctrines and ordinances of her ever-blessed Master, AUTHORITY. She will allow no other construction to be put upon them, than that which was *first*: she will admit of no alteration in any of the great doctrines and sacred ordinances of the Gospel, out of

^a See answer to question on Tradition.

deference to any man's *private opinion*: she will permit none of her members, to set up his own *private judgment* in opposition to the *testimony* of the cloud of witnesses, who, in their several generations, taught and maintained all that her heavenly Head and Master committed to her charge, and commanded her to make known to all the nations of the world. Hence, one of the everlasting marks by which the Church of God is ever to be distinguished, is, that she teach and make known the whole will of God as revealed, and be ever careful, rightly to divide the word of truth: hence also, the care with which every pure and perfect branch of the Church, provides for the daily reading of the sacred Scriptures, in the ears of her members, and for the preservation of all the sacred ordinances, instituted for their nourishment in spiritual grace. From all that may be collected on the subject then, it appears that, according to Holy Scripture, the proper and legitimate exercise of private judgment, is—to *examine the evidence*, on which any doctrine or practice may claim to be of Divine origin, or Apostolical institution: or to ascertain, that the teacher be duly authorized to preach the glad tidings of salvation^r, and that he be really inculcating Evangelical truth, and not his own unauthorized opinions^s. Every

^r Rom. x. 15.

^s 1 John iv. 1.

passage of Scripture, generally speaking, can have but one true and orthodox meaning; and this, where there is room for dispute, must be established on the *testimony* of those who, in all ages, have been esteemed faithful and true witnesses. The exercise of private judgment, is therefore allowed to every Christian, on these conditions, and to this extent: 1st. That he be disposed to obey the law of God as supreme, and to comply with the Divine will in all things, as far as it has been revealed, and can be discovered: 2dly. That he be not like those of whom St. Peter speaks, who “willingly are ignorant[†],” but that, with the humility of a little child, he be willing to receive instruction in the Divine law: and 3dly. That in *examining evidence*, he be fully resolved not to determine, without due inquiry and reflection; such would be *caprice*, not *persuasion*: nor to decide on partial evidence; such would be *prejudice* not *just judgment*: but that he be disposed, as far as the means of doing so are within his reach, to investigate fully, deliberate candidly, and decide impartially, concerning the *testimony* which the teachers can adduce in favour of their doctrines, and in proof of their Commission. This is the point to which private judgment may be carried; but beyond which, according to

† 2 Pet. iii. 5.

the principles of the Church Catholic, it is neither safe nor lawful. For having ascertained, that the teacher has our Lord's commission to make known all that He commanded, and that the doctrines which he teaches, and the practices which he recommends, are contained in the sacred Record, or may be proved thereby; and that the testimony of faithful and veritable witnesses may be adduced in favour of what is taught and recommended; then there is no further room for the exercise of private judgment. The deepest veneration, the most implicit obedience, is henceforth required. There is to be no calculation of consequences: no reasoning concerning the fitness of the Divine Laws and Ordinances: no conjectures about either the obligation or the advantage of due obedience and entire submission. Sufficient it is to have ample evidence, that what is taught is the will of God; that what is recommended, are His institutions. All appeals to private judgment would, in this case, be dangerous and sinful. Yet thousands upon thousands, have even here ventured to disregard testimony, and to trust to private judgment. Thus each has constituted himself into an *infallible* expositor of the Divine will. The faithful member of Christ's holy Church cannot however believe, that in such cases, either presumptuous reason, or wild imagination, has any right

to come into the province of humble and confiding faith. God requires no man to *believe* without the fullest investigation; but having graciously permitted His servants to ascertain that what is taught is really the will of God, He demands, for the truths which He has revealed, and the laws which He has appointed, and the ordinances which He has instituted, the readiest reception, and the deepest regard. He has given a commission to His Ministers to teach the knowledge of these laws, and the importance of these institutions, to all nations; and He has, moreover, revealed the awful truth, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for those who refuse to be taught by His servants. Thus, whilst I believe that the canon of sacred Scripture contains all those truths that are necessary to make one wise unto salvation^u; and also, that the true and primitive explanation of these truths, as well as the nature and importance of every sacred institution, is to be determined on the *testimony* of those who have ever been esteemed true and faithful witnesses of Evangelical truth; I am bound, by my principles, to esteem THE WILL OF GOD as THE LAW, to which I must yield obedience; and *the*

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Church Catholic, guided by primitive testimony, as *the Teacher*, through whom I am to learn this Law, and the *Channel* through which I am to derive the blessings connected with the divine Ordinances. This is the principle on which the Reformation was undertaken and accomplished, in the Church of England, and Church in Scotland; and when rightly understood, is utterly hostile to every error and innovation, and rigidly conservative of pure Evangelical doctrine, and Apostolical practice. In things sacred, this principle will allow no man to set up his own judgment as infallible; nor any party to adduce its peculiar tenets as an authoritative rule: but, on the other hand, it requires every member of the Church to submit to the will of God, as the ultimate Law, from which there is no appeal; and in subserviency to this, to the voice of the Church, faithfully teaching and expounding this Law. I know that those yielding to the spirit of the age, are induced each to exalt himself into an infallible judge of what is true and proper; but I, as a humble member of Christ's holy Church, must be guided by a very different spirit. The Almighty Himself thus speaks, and from His words His servants may learn wisdom: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore, *thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn*

them from Me^x." To the same purpose are our blessed Lord's words, in reference to those whom He has sent to *teach* what *He has commanded*: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me^y." If any thing can add strength to these sayings, it may probably be found in this: "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican^z." Thus, on the one hand, I claim and am allowed the right of *private judgment*, to "prove all things:" and, on the other, I am bound *implicitly to submit to the will of God*, as maintained and *taught in His Church*, not merely in One age, or by One party, but *by the faithful*, from the ascension of our blessed Lord to the present day^a.

Q. But strict adherence to these primitive and apostolical principles has, in all ages and countries, subjected the members of the Church to much opposition, and frequently to no small persecution; ought not every possible means to be adopted to remove this evil, and to advance the interests of the Church?

A. The Church of Christ, since the very first, has indeed been subjected to trials, more or less

^x Ezek. xxxiii. 7.

^z St. Matt. xviii. 17.

^y St. Luke x. 16.

^a Vide Note C.

severe ; but her members are not to throw down the Cross in despair, nor to sink under such hardships, nor even to murmur greatly on account of them, Our blessed Master suffered much in this respect, during the whole season of His public Ministry ; and His servants are not to expect, that their lot will be without crosses and privations^b. To these, they are patiently to submit^c. Nor are they to adopt undue measures to promote the cause of Christ's religion, and the interests of His Church. When our Lord was beset by His most deadly enemies, He would not allow His servants to use unlawful means in His defence ; but commanded Peter to put up his sword, and warned His disciples of the danger of such violent proceedings^d : so when His Church, which is His body, is surrounded with enemies, her servants are not to use any violent or imprudent means to ward off the danger. In cases where they have acted otherwise, and lifted the arm of flesh, either in her defence, or with the view of advancing her interests, they have invariably failed in the attainment of their object. They are faithfully, but quietly, to discharge their duty, each in his station, whether that station be lay or clerical ; and having done so, they are submissively to leave

^b St. John xv. 20.

^c St. Matt. v. 44.

^d St. Matt. xxvi. 52.

the event to God; and humbly to trust to Him to give the increase to their labours. Did the strength of the Church consist in the number of her members, or her success in the immediate destruction of her enemies, then we might reasonably suppose, that something would have been revealed concerning the crowded state of her courts, and that more than twelve legions of angels would presently be given her, whenever she is in danger. But how then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, which speak of the trials and privations which await those who walk in Christ's footsteps; and also, of the success of many who shall appear in Christ's name, but who are really wolves in sheep's clothing? The Church, like her blessed Master, is capable of effecting many wonderful works, if men will only believe; but if they expect signs and wonders, they will receive none; for the strength of the Church is not in her outward appearance, but in her humble submission to the Divine will in all things, and on all occasions. In faithful imitation of their blessed Master, therefore, the disciples of Jesus are to drink the cup which the Father sees fit to give them. Hence their principles teach them fidelity to all that God requires: submission to all the trials by which He thinks proper to prove them: patience under all the afflictions, through which He may correct or

purify His Church: and forbearance, till it please Him, in His own good time, and in the way that He may think best, to relieve her from her distress, or to restore her to her glory. The members of the Catholic Church are thus bound, by their principles, to discharge their duty with equal cheerfulness and equal fidelity, whether the circumstances of the Church be prosperous or adverse. In the day of prosperity they fear; in the day of adversity they hope. Counsels for the good of the Church, and the advancement of her interests, they are bound to adopt; but these must always be in strict accordance with Apostolical rule and practice. Ardent zeal for the propagation of all her holy doctrines and principles they ought to cherish, but then it must always be tempered with prudence and moderation. They are never to suppose, that their own ways for advancing the cause of truth, are superior to God's ways; and, therefore, they are not to attempt to manage the affairs of His Church, in any other way than that which He has sanctioned. Warmed with holy zeal for the honour of our blessed Redeemer, and the promulgation of all His saving doctrines, and the due administration of all His holy ordinances; and praying always for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, as well as for the Divine blessing on their labours, they go on re-

joicing. In the midst of abuse, and opposition, and petty persecution, they quietly discharge every duty, and adopt every scriptural means, by which the doctrines of the Cross may be more generally promulgated, and the means of grace more highly appreciated, and the sacred character of Christ's holy Church more fully understood. Thus, endeavouring to find out the will of God, and to comply with it in every respect, Episcopalians seek not to secure success by their own arms. They submit themselves to the guidance of that wisdom which is from above, and, be the more immediate result prosperous or adverse, they heed it not: be their course through good report, or through evil report, they never think of turning aside from the path, but cheerfully and resolutely, and with patience, run the race that is set before them.

Q. According to the principles of Episcopacy, the Bishop is esteemed the Pastor of his Diocese; is not this principle hostile to the notion, that the right of choosing their Minister is vested in the people?

A. In this, as well as in every thing else connected with the religion and Church of Christ, Episcopalians are willing to be guided entirely by the voice of Revelation. Every right which God, in His holy word, has conferred on His people, the

Church, instead of seeking to curtail, must always be ready to confirm. Among many, the opinion is prevalent, that the right of choosing their Pastor is solely, if not uncontrollably, vested in the people. But this opinion is not well founded, and if its practical effects be observed, it will be seen that it is dangerous. The people, when constituted sole judges of the fitness and qualifications of their teacher, are tempted to become critics and judges of Christian theology and Christian ethics; and hence, are inclined to attend to the acquirements of the individual more than to his commission from Christ. From this step, they are insensibly led to decide concerning the rule of Christian duty, and the respect due to religious obligation. They judge of doctrines—of ordinances—of preachers; and if they are dissatisfied with any of these, they are often inclined to raise dissension in the bosom of the community to which they belong, or to withdraw from its connection, and form a new sect, and seek for teachers more according to their mind. They look upon the Christian Minister as the servant of the congregation, not as the servant of God. They think that the Pastor ought to be guided by the flock, rather than the flock by the Pastor. They conclude, that they are conferring a favour on him by attending on his Ministry; not that he is sent to

impart a blessing to them by teaching them the way of life. Another, and worse consequence is, that Preachers are thus induced to seek to please men more than to please God. They are tempted to preach doctrines which they know to be popular, without giving themselves much trouble in regard to their soundness; they study phraseology more with the view of gratifying the audience, than of making men wise unto salvation. The principles inculcated in the Church, are calculated to set bounds to this danger. These principles are set forth in the following portions of the sacred Record. "There is no power but of God^e." "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights^f." "God *sent* His only Son into the world, that we might live through Him^g." "Jesus *sent* forth His disciples" to preach the Gospel, and with full power to bring all men into His kingdom^h. His Apostles, as ambassadors for Him, ordained others, and *sent* them forth to teach and to preach, to rebuke and to admonish, and in their turn to ordain others, who should be able to teach others alsoⁱ. In connection with these passages, others may be taken, which make their mean-

^e Rom. xiii. 1.

^f James i. 17.

^g 1 John iv. 9.

^h St. Matt. x. 5; xxviii. 19; St. John xx. 21.

ⁱ Vide Epistles to Timothy and Titus, throughout.

ing still more definite. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would *send* forth labourers into His harvest^k." "He that receiveth whomsoever I *send*, receiveth Me^l." "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Now, although the Church has, from time immemorial, conceded to those who have a civil right of presenting to a vacant Charge, the privilege of expressing an opinion in regard to the choice of a Pastor^m; yet her members, fully impressed with a sense of the importance of the texts just quoted, are disposed to exercise this privilege with extreme caution, and under a deep sense of the great danger of interfering with the manner in which it appeared best to Infinite Wisdom to make known the way of salvation to men. They are well aware, that the Bishop is authorized and bound, by the heavenly Head of the Church, to *send forth* faithful teachers into the congregations under his chargeⁿ. They are therefore willing to have recourse to his advice, and to defer to his judgment whensoever there is occasion. Well aware that, although the footsteps of God are not known, and

^k St. Matt. ix. 38.

^l St. John xiii. 20.

^m Vide Canon X. of the Scotch Episcopal Church.

ⁿ 1 Tim. v. 22.

that men are not able to trace the close connection between the cause and the effect; yet they are fully convinced, that where the Divine institutions are most respected, the Divine blessing will be best secured: and, on the other hand, that where the former are neglected or despised, even if it be but in part, the latter will be so far withheld, to the sad loss of those who have been unfaithful or disobedient. It is by due deference to the Divine laws and ordinances, that a proper spirit, in both Pastor and flock, is begotten and cherished, and that peace and unity in the Church are promoted and preserved. The *Pastor* is thus kept in mind, that he is *God's messenger* to make known the Divine will to the people, and that he is, therefore, not to seek to please men, but God: the *flock*, on the other hand, are thus taught to look up to the Son of God as the great Prophet who *sends* out His servants to *teach* His people; and so to acknowledge, that it is to Him they owe, not only their redemption from misery, and their prospect of happiness, but also their *knowledge of things necessary to salvation*. The principles of the Church, if rightly understood, do therefore in this respect, as well as in every other, direct the attention of Churchmen to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, as all in all in His Church; as the only Author and Finisher of our faith; as the

great Prophet, Priest, and King, whom we are to venerate and obey.

Q. Suppose you were to meet with a Romanist disposed to argue against the necessity of *the Reformation*, on the ground, that dangerous error can never be found in the Catholic Church, since our Lord has expressly declared that the gates of hell shall never prevail against His Church: how would you answer?

A. In the first place, I would refer him to the Church of Corinth or of Galatia, in the days of St. Paul; but, in an especial manner, would I refer him to the *second* and *third* chapters of the Revelation of St. John, where we have the declaration of Him "that liveth, and was dead, and that is alive for evermore," concerning the seven Churches of Asia. These Churches were, indisputably, portions of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ. The Romanist dare not deny this. Yet it is equally beyond dispute, that these Churches, planted by the Apostles, and watered by the Spirit of God, had actually declined into error, and were in danger of going further astray; and hence, that they stood in need of *reform*; that is, they had need to repent, and to return to their first love. But if errors—dangerous to the members, and displeasing to the heavenly Head of the Church—thus found their way into the

famous portions of the Church Catholic, over which the beloved Disciple watched, it must be folly to argue, that the same thing may not happen to any other branch of the Church ; and that *reform*, that is, a return to its first love, or restoration to its primitive state of purity, would not therefore be necessary. But these circumstances afford evidence, that our blessed Lord's prediction is applicable to such portions of His Church, as are disposed to purify themselves of error whenever it is pointed out, and to return to the rule of Apostolical doctrine and fellowship, whenever they may be aware of having departed from it. Against such portions of the Church, the gates of hell do not prevail ; whereas, if a portion of the Church Catholic go on from bad to worse ; if, instead of repenting, it seek to establish iniquity by law ; if, instead of rejecting error, and returning to primitive purity, it authoritatively introduce error into its creed, and promulgate new and strange doctrines as Catholic verities ; then it becomes a matter of serious consideration, whether the gates of hell have not prevailed against such portion of the Church ; prevailed so far, as to render communion with it both dangerous and sinful, if not to deprive it of all title to be considered a portion of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ. There can be no agreement between God and Belial. Errors in

doctrine, or in practice, may find their way into any portion of the Church ; but until they be established by authority, or amalgamated with the creed, they can be considered only as the opinions and practices of individuals. Such erroneous opinions and practices, although highly dangerous, and apt, if not checked, to work themselves into the very constitution of the Church ; yet whilst they form no part of the public creed, and whilst blameable practices are sanctioned by no general law of the Church, it would be unfair to say, that such portion of the Church was in subjection to Satan. No : in such case, it is only in that state in which the seven Churches of Asia were, when He, who is the First and the Last, was pleased to reveal His judgment concerning them. In such state was the Western Church, including the Anglican branch, at the era of the Reformation. In such state was the Church of Rome previous to the Council of Trent. It possessed the marks of the Church—obscured, it is true, by a mass of error—but the errors were then only adventitious ; they formed no part of the creed : the superstitious practices were of the same character ; they were established by no general law. It was only by the authority of the Tridentine Council, that these doctrines and practices were made imperative. Henceforth they affected and changed the very

character of the portion of the Church, with which they were thus connected. Thus it may be said, that the gates of hell begin to close around the Church, whenever error is admitted into her courts; but that they do not prevail against her, in cases where she resists and throws it off. It is only in those cases where the Church establishes error by authority, and sets it forth as truth; and where she is so subdued as to be no longer able to make any exertions for her recovery, and so blinded as to glory in her shame, that it becomes a question whether the gates of hell are not closed upon her. Thus the Reformation, instead of militating against our Lord's prediction, tends greatly to establish it; whilst the authoritative introduction of new and strange doctrines into the creed, and the pertinacious maintenance of practices unheard of in primitive times, afford just ground of suspicion, that the gates of hell have, in a great measure, really prevailed against the portions of the Church which so offend^o.

Q. Should a Romanist ask where the Protestant Church was previous to the Reformation; what would you answer?

A. I should answer, that it was in the bosom of the Western Church, and in subjection to the See of Rome; that, in this servile state, it was oppressed

^o On this subject, see "Newman's Lectures on Romanism."

with many erroneous doctrines and superstitious practices; but that, amid this mass of modern inventions, it still happily retained its ancient creed, and the record of its early mode of obedience, and the commission of its Lord and Master, handed down from generation to generation; and that even in its most degraded state, it was at all times in a condition, whenever a favourable opportunity should occur, to assert its liberty, and return to its primitive purity. And should the Romanist say, as he probably would say, "The Protestant religion is a new religion, which had no being in the world till 1500 years after Christ; therefore, it comes 1500 years too late to be the true Church of Christ. Martin Luther laid the first foundation of the Protestant religion in the year 1517, and his followers took the name of Protestants in the year 1529; before which time, neither the name nor the religion, was ever heard of in the Christian world; and we defy all learned men amongst them, to name so much as one single name before Luther, who held throughout their Thirty-nine Articles, or any other entire system of Protestantism, as it is now professed, in any country upon earth^p." This the Romanist would say; and I should calmly reply: The Protestant Episcopalians of England and Scotland, at

^p Vide Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, &c. p. 71.

the Reformation, made no change in a single article of the creed of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. They neither added to what had anciently been believed, nor detracted from it. They protested against certain innovations, and on that account were called Protestants; but this, instead of depriving them of the right to be called Catholics, greatly confirmed them in that right. The Protestant Catholic appeals to the word of God as the foundation of his faith and practice, and to the earliest records of the Church, in proof that his is no new system of doctrine or obedience. He does not acknowledge Luther as the author of a single article of his creed. The self-same creed as the Apostles and first Christians received, is that which the Protestant Catholic professes. At the Reformation, the Catholic Church in England, *protested* against the authority of those who would have introduced error into her creed; and not only so, but purified herself of the errors which had crept into her courts. But *she altered not her creed*; and although she guarded it by the authorized explanation contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, yet she then maintained, and still maintains, that any one of the three creeds which are to be found in her Book of Prayer, contains a complete summary of the Christian faith, as promulgated by the Apostles, and sanctioned by the

earliest General Councils. As a member of that portion of the Holy Catholic Church, therefore, I might in turn ask the Romanist, where the Romish religion was before the Reformation. I might adopt his own language and assert, that the Romish religion is a new religion, which had no being in the world till 1500 years and upwards after Christ. The Council of Trent, which concluded its deliberations in 1563, and Pope Pius IV., on the decrees of that Council, laid the foundation of the Romish religion about that time. Before that time, the Romish creed was never heard of in the Christian world; and all the learned men among them, could not adduce so much as one single name who held, throughout, the profession of faith of Pope Pius IV., or any other entire system of Romanism, as it is now professed, in any country upon earth. In so far as it is Catholic and primitive, the Protestant Catholic cordially receives it; in as far as it is Romish and new, he unequivocally rejects it. The creed of the Holy Apostolic Church, is the creed of the Protestant^a Catholic Church. The Episco-

^a The epithet "Protestant," here and elsewhere in this treatise, when standing immediately before the word "Catholic," is synonymous with the words "true," "primitive," or "apostolic." The necessity of using this, or a similar term, is caused by the circumstance of the members of the Church of Rome being commonly designated "Roman Catholics." The term "Protestant," is meant

pallians of England and Scotland, never apostatized from the Church of their fathers, nor changed a single article of their creed. Their creed was the creed of the Church of Rome, previous to the Council of Trent, and to this very day it forms *part* of the Romish confession of faith. The Protestant Catholic Church has therefore been since the *beginning*; it has undergone no material change in doctrine, mode of worship, or form of government. At the Reformation it merely *protested* against what was new and erroneous, but gave up nothing that was primitive and apostolical.

Q. Did not our blessed Lord give the supremacy to Peter? and would not the unity of the Church Catholic be secured by the continued supremacy of one; the Pope of Rome, for example?

A. There is no good reason to conclude, that our Lord gave any such supremacy to Peter^r. It is matter of historical fact, nay of scriptural truth, that James, and not Peter, presided in the councils of

to distinguish those portions of the Church Catholic which protested against the errors of Rome, and returned to primitive purity. If, to any, the term in this sense be offensive, let them either strike out the word where it occurs immediately before "Catholic," or substitute in its stead, the word, "true," or "primitive."

^r Vide "The Church of Rome in her primitive purity, compared with the Church of Rome at the present day," by Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont, in the United States.

the Apostles. This would not have been the case, had our Lord invested Peter with authority superior to that of his brethren. In the answer which our Lord gave to the mother of James and John, when she desired for her sons a place more honourable than ordinary, we find indisputable evidence, that the Apostles were all to be equally honoured*. Christ, the heavenly Head of the Church, is alone supreme. To His authority, all His servants must submit. This regulation in the Church is founded in infinite wisdom, for *unity* may thus be effectually preserved. If one Bishop should attempt to disturb this unity by introducing change, in any degree or in any way, into the articles of faith, or the modes of obedience, or the manner of maintaining brotherly love in the Church, his brethren can immediately check the innovator; whereas, if *one* on earth were called Master, the grossest errors might be propagated: no proper check could be given; and the greatest confusion would ensue. The history of the Church affords sufficient evidence of the superiority of God's ways to men's ways, in this very respect; and also, of the danger and disastrous consequences of departing from the former. The idea is plausible, which would make *one* on earth the centre of unity as well as of authority; but when acted upon, it has

* St. Matt. xx. 26, 27; xxiii. 8, 10.

been found to be worse than useless ; so that the only effectual method of preserving unity, is to acknowledge Christ as the divine Head of the Church, and the only centre of authority to which every Bishop is to look. It is what Christ, as spiritual Head of His Church, has revealed, that His ambassadors are to study ; what He has commanded, that they are to teach ; what He has ordained, that they are to administer ; what He has instituted, that they are to revere. Thus all will be of " One Spirit ;" all will acknowledge " One Lord ;" all will hold " One faith ;" all will be introduced into the Church by " One baptism ;" and all will worship and serve " One God and Father of all." By this arrangement, every particular portion of the Church is directly connected, not only with the whole family, but with Christ Himself. Every Bishop, as an ambassador for Christ, has under him a complete portion of the Church, consisting of himself, his Presbyters and Deacons, and the laity. Again ; all the Bishops of a province or nation, with their Presbyters, Deacons, and laity, form a complete portion of the Church, on a larger scale ; and in the highest or Catholic sense, all the Bishops, throughout the world, with the Presbyters, Deacons, and laity, constitute the One, Holy, Apostolic Church of Christ ; and these Bishops, individually, nationally,

or universally, look up to Christ as their Head, revere His authority, respect His laws, and venerate His sacred institutions. True it is that, as in the Church during its earliest days, so is it to be in every branch of it to the end of time. One is to be appointed by his brethren to preside in the councils of Bishops, so that *order* in all things may be preserved ; but such President, or Primus, or Archbishop, is, in a spiritual sense, to have no authority whatsoever above his brethren. "Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself." The Church, whilst the supreme authority of her great King is duly respected, is at perfect unity in *faith, obedience, and brotherly love*, in every diocese, in every province, and throughout the world. By exalting *man* as supreme, dissension, strife, and division, have been the bitter fruits ; and a lesson has thus been given to the world, that the peace and unity of the Church can never be secured by any other method, than that which has God for its Author.

Q. But Protestant sectaries of every denomination, and even Churchmen, who are ignorant of the true principles of the Church Catholic, when they perceive the profound regard which you entertain for primitive doctrines and practices, will probably try to shake your fidelity, by accusing you of a disposition to promote the cause of Popery ; how

would you vindicate your conduct under such circumstances ?

A. Because I will not go the length that some have gone, and give up much that is pure and Apostolical, from the anile dread of being accused of Popery, it may perhaps be asserted, by those who know no better, or who have an interest in wishing it to be believed, that my respect for what is Primitive, betrays a leaning towards that which is Popish. But I should like to ask such, if they can tell what is meant by Popery? And also, what is meant by Primitive Christianity? And, further, if they have any distinct notions of the points wherein these differ? Until they can distinctly answer these questions, their assertions can have very little claim upon our consideration. To *assert* is one thing; to *prove* is another. Apostolical truth was *before* Papal error. The former I venerate; the latter I abhor: but my abhorrence of the latter does not lessen my veneration for the former. The principles of the Protestant Episcopal Church, will not permit its members to go along with those who, in their zeal to reform errors in doctrine or practice, would interfere with Catholic verities and primitive institutions. Be error ever so prevalent or gross, there is a point beyond which reformation must not go: for, under the plea of escaping from

error, it is quite possible to run away from the truth. In former ages, the danger to be apprehended lay in a desire to mix up truth with error; at the present time, the risk is, that along with error, many important truths may be thrown away. The Church does not expect to approach perfection, by going along with reckless reformers; but by carefully inquiring what was *first*, and faithfully abiding by it. The errors which were introduced during the lapse of ages, must be rejected—rejected for ever: the defects of more modern times—if defects there be—must be supplied, but with extreme caution, and a regard both to the letter and to the spirit of the Gospel, and to the rule and practice of the Apostolical and earliest ages. This is the only rule which the Church either teaches, or permits her faithful members to respect; and whilst they steadily observe it, they may laugh to scorn the foolish attempts of ignorant or fanatical men, to fix upon them the stigma of Popery. Such men may revile the members of the Church, and say all manner of evil against them, on account of their unalterable regard for the pure and primitive doctrines and practices of the Church. But our blessed Lord teaches His servants to rejoice, rather than to be offended, at such things. I cannot, therefore, think less of true Church principles, because some

may choose to term them Popish. I know that they are not so; nay more, I know that the *opinions* of those who speak lightly of primitive principles, tend more directly to Popery, than their supporters may be willing to admit, or disposed to believe. But such must always be the case, where modern notions are preferred to Evangelical truth, and where the *authority* of newly-erected schools of Divinity is more respected, than the *testimony* of those who were taught by the Apostles, and employed in laying the very foundations of the Church. I boldly and candidly avow the desire to continue stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship; and I would advise those who call this "a disposition to promote the cause of Popery," to consider well, *whither* their own notions of Christian duty are likely to lead them. If I be in company with the Apostles and first Christians, I have no fear of my principles; nor do I dread the consequences of going back to all that is necessary and practicable, in order that the Church may be brought to fuller agreement with the Apostles, in doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Q. Should a Romanist allege, that as the Church in Britain was at one time in alliance with the Church of Rome, the Romish sect in Britain at the

present day is, on that account, more closely allied to the ancient British Church, than the present Anglican Church; what answer would you give?

A. I should reply, that a pure branch of the Church Catholic was established in Britain long previous to its connection with Rome; that this connection was merely an adventitious circumstance; and that, at the Reformation, the Church in Britain asserted its ancient independence, and broke its connection with Rome: but that the Church thus restored to its purity and independence, did not, on this account, cease to be the British Church. Were a man to build a house, and, after a time, to submit to the dictation of another, who by degrees persuaded him to fill it with toys, and beplaster its walls with mud, and so render it of very inconvenient habitation; and were he, after a time, to break off all connection with one who had advised him to such folly, and not only so, but to empty his house of the gewgaws with which it was incommoded, and cleanse its walls of the filth by which they were disfigured, what folly would it be to allege, that on account of these operations, it was not the original house which he had always inhabited! But greater folly still would it be, were his old companion, after this, to persuade another man to build another house beside this man's, and to fill it with the same toys,

and cover its walls with the same disfigurements, as the other had cleared away, and then to advise him to assert, that this new structure was the original house, and that the other was a modern building; and that its inhabitant ought to believe this, and straightway leave his own ancient dwelling, and go and live with his new neighbour, and so get into his own original house! No more egregious folly than this could well be conceived; and yet it is not greater than what we see in those who would assert, that they who, in Britain, adhere to the Church of Rome, have a title to be considered as representing the ancient Church of the land. It is a plain historical fact, that the Church in Britain asserted its independence of Rome, and purified itself of the corruptions of the middle ages, at the Reformation: not indeed with any intention of forming a new Church, but with the full resolution of returning to the model of primitive times. It is also matter of historical fact, that the British adherents to the Roman See, are a sect dating their origin from the 12th of Queen Elizabeth. It was then that a few were persuaded by the Pope, to break off from the communion of the Anglican Church, and form themselves into a sect, resuming the errors of Rome, and acknowledging the Roman Pontiff as their head. Previous to that time, the present sect of the Roman

Catholics, (as they are commonly called,) had no existence in Britain. What folly then to suppose, that this sect is connected in any way with the ancient Anglican Church. The Romanists in Britain form a sect, dating its origin from the reign of Elizabeth, holding the doctrines of the Council of Trent, acknowledging the authority of the Bishop of Rome, and living in a state of miserable schism. As well might the sect of the Wesleyans, or of the Independents, assert that they formed the ancient Church of Britain. We can tell the very year when these had their origin; and so can we tell the very year when the sect of the Romanists in Britain, took its rise. To the Romanist, arguing that his was the old Anglican Church, I should therefore reply, that either he was very ignorant of Ecclesiastical history, or that he must suppose me to be so, otherwise he would never think of palming so ridiculous a story on my belief; a story, if possible, more preposterous than that of the "Nag's Head Consecrations," which some Romanists have had the hardihood to propagate, in defiance of the clearest historical evidence, and, in consequence, have got themselves laughed at, by all who are in the least conversant with the history of the case. I should, then, in the spirit of true Christian charity, beseech my Romanist opponent to reflect seriously, whether

he does wisely, thus to impose on himself by such pitiful shifts, or to attempt to impose upon others. The ignorant may be misled by bold assertions ; but those who are acquainted with the history of the Anglican Church since the Reformation, can never be deceived by such means. Nay, when they find a cause supported by such expedients, it must tend to make them think worse of it, than, peradventure, they would otherwise do[†].

Q. But after all, do you not agree with the members of the Church of Rome in many things, and refuse to join in the cry of those who utterly condemn them?

A. I certainly am not one of those who think that there is nothing good among the Romanists, and that they, in every respect, are worthy of nought but abuse. That they have erred grievously, I maintain ; but that they still retain much that is scriptural and primitive, I believe. Hence, I agree with them in all things in which they agree with the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. For example ; I agree with them in observing the first day of the week as the Lord's day ; and Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Whit-Sunday,

[†] For a very masterly statement of facts involved in this subject, the reader is referred to Dr. Hook's celebrated Sermon, "Hear the Church," preached before the Queen.

as seasons of more than ordinary importance to Christians. I agree with them in receiving as a rule of faith, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, because they are all founded on Holy Scripture, and may be proved thereby ; but I differ from them in rejecting the Tridentine Creed, whose articles are opposed to the sacred record of God's word, and founded on mere *unwritten* Tradition. I agree with them in admitting children to Holy Baptism, and in respecting the solemn rite of Confirmation, because these sacred duties have the full sanction of Scripture and primitive authority ; although I differ from them in esteeming the latter a Sacrament, equal in importance and character to Baptism or the Lord's Supper. I agree with them in receiving the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments, as the revealed word of God ; but I differ from them in rejecting apocryphal and traditionary records, as possessing any thing like divine authority : I value the Holy Scriptures as containing *the revealed counsel of God*, and, therefore, I put upon its heavenly doctrines the interpretation of the Apostles and first Christians ; and hence I differ from the Romanists, in rejecting new and strange interpretations, which make the everlasting Word of God subservient to the vain opinions and traditions of men. I agree with them

in resolutely maintaining the doctrine of the Apostolical succession; but I wholly differ from them in acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, or admitting his authority beyond the boundary of his own diocese: and I agree with them in thinking, that a certain degree of decent respect is due to things set apart to the worship and service of God; although I differ from them, in utterly detesting and abhorring any sort of homage that could, even by the ignorant, be construed into religious reverence, for any created object or representation whatsoever: I worship God, and God alone, and I do so in spirit and in truth, and not through any image or similitude. I also agree with them in addressing my prayers to God the Father, through His only Son, our Mediator and Advocate, and in acknowledging the need of the continual aid and comfort of the Holy Spirit; but I entirely differ from them in addressing God through the mediation of any saint or angel, and in thinking that I can be aided, in any manner or way, by the intercession of departed spirits, or even by the ministry of angels, further than these are the messengers of God, and employed in His service. I agree with the members of the Church of Rome, in believing that there is a middle state between the hour of death and the day of judgment; but in regard to the circumstances of

this state, I totally differ from them: my belief, as a member of the Catholic Church of Christ, is, that at the hour of death, the soul enters into a state where they who have kept the faith, and finished the course of their probation with patience, do rest from their labours, and are inexpressibly happy in the clear and certain prospect of a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give them at that day when He descends to judge the world; and where the wicked, on the other hand, are in all the horror and misery that must be endured by those, to whom nought remains "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries:" thus I believe, that "in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be;" that in the grave there is no place for repentance; that immediately on entering into a future state, there is a separation between the righteous and the wicked, by a great and impassable gulph, which no prayers nor intercessions of men can remove: the belief of the members of the Roman Catholic Church, in contradistinction to this, is, that the middle state is a Purgatory, where the situation or state of departed souls is affected and changed by certain prayers and alms and masses, so that those detained, for either lesser or greater sins, are liberated, after having

undergone a certain purification, and made full satisfaction to the Divine justice, and are forthwith admitted into a more exalted state of bliss, if not even into the highest heaven^u. I agree with the Romanists in believing, that Christ is really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist, but after a spiritual and heavenly manner ; and, therefore, I differ from them utterly and for ever, in the belief that the Real Presence in the Sacrament, involves the change of the bread into the very corporeal flesh of our Lord, and of the wine into the very blood which flowed in the veins of His natural body. There is nothing carnal, nothing earthly, in this heavenly mystery: neither transubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, but the *spiritual Presence* of our Lord and Redeemer. I also agree with the members of the Romish Church, in believing schism to be a grievous and dangerous sin; and, therefore, I can never agree with them in approving of the conduct of their sect in this country, which betrays such a gross violation of this principle. I agree with them in believing, that the Ministers and members of the Church, are under the strongest obligation to advance the interests of our Lord's kingdom, by propagating the truths of the Gospel, by contending earnestly for the faith, and by driving away all

^u Vide "Grounds of Catholic Doctrine," chap. 7. Of Purgatory.

strange doctrine, and discountenancing all rebellious and divisive courses; but I differ from them in supposing, that these mighty purposes are ever, or under any pretence, to be accomplished by violence or persecution, or even by hypocrisy or cunning. The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of peace, and its subjects have no right nor liberty to use any other weapon in its behalf, than the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: in the mouth of its Prince no guile was found, and His ambassadors are to learn of Him, and walk in His footsteps. And not to multiply instances, I willingly agree with them in every doctrine and practice, wherein their portion of the Church is pure and primitive; but in those things wherein it has become corrupt and unscriptural, I detest and resist it, as I would the enemy of God and Antichrist. Thus, I cannot join in the cry of those who speak nothing but ill of the Romanists and their Church; for they were the means, under God, of handing down to us the inestimable gifts of God's revealed Will, and our Lord's Commission, which gives effect and authority to the acts of His Ministers: and, even in the darkest ages of their history, they had among them some eminent and resolute advocates for the leading doctrines of our most holy faith: and to this day, they certainly may boast of many learned and pious men;

whilst their works of charity are neither trifling nor few. In my opinion, therefore, one must be wholly blinded by prejudice, who would deny that, in various offices of religion which have been used, and are still used among them, and in the writings of their Ecclesiastics and learned men, much that we firmly hold as Scriptural truth, is set forth and defended. How great soever, therefore, my detestation of the *errors* of Popery may be; and few, I believe, detest them more cordially than I do; I cannot for a moment suppose, but that it would betray a sad want of Christian charity, were I to refuse to the Romanists and the Roman Church, the meed of praise which is justly their due. St. Paul would have us to draw men to the truth with cords of love; and as one willing to follow the Apostolical precept, I would speak to the Church of Rome as I would to an erring sister, who had forsaken the guide of her youth, and turned aside into paths of folly and iniquity. Charitably and candidly would I tell her of the errors into which she had fallen, and kindly and anxiously would I persuade her to retrace her steps. I would not go along with her—no, not for an inch—in her folly and her sin: I would embrace none of her errors, nor give her the least reason to suppose that I approved of them: I would resist her encroachments on society, in the

same manner as I would cut off all intercourse between a polluted woman, and the innocent and pure; and, as she had proved unfaithful in things of great and eternal moment, I would not place such confidence in her professions of rectitude and harmlessness, as to allow her to converse freely with the ignorant and unsuspecting; but I would not harden her in her wickedness by continual railing and unqualified abuse: I would rather address her through those good principles for which she still retains no small regard, and endeavour, by this means, to convince her of the sin and danger of the evil ways into which she has turned aside. I would remind her of what her principles once were; of the honour with which she was decked in her early youth; of the sorrow it causes her companions to see her thrust out from their society; and of the injury which our Lord's kingdom must sustain, from the grievous schism caused by her wayward conduct. Why should Rome refuse to return to her first love! Why should she hesitate to take sweet counsel with those, who would willingly walk with her in the paths trodden by the Apostles and first Christians! O Rome, Rome, why should you any longer do despite to your own better judgment! Why should you persist in pursuing a course which your *own* best friends know to be wrong! Why

should you continue to be a grief to all who are anxious to "see and ask for the Old Paths, and to walk therein!" Return, and give joy to those who once went in and out along with you! Return, and give joy to Him whose undefiled you ought to be! Return, Return, and be no longer foolish! Return, Return, and those that shall see thee shall bless thee!

Q. Should a Presbyterian, Independent, or one of any other sect, argue, that all are agreed in *essentials*, and that it is only in things indifferent that there is any disagreement between Episcopalians and the denominations around them, how would you reply to such an one?

A. I should, in the first place, be under the necessity of asking such a person, what he meant by *essentials*, and *non-essentials*, in religion. If by *non-essentials*, be meant any doctrine or institution of our blessed Lord, I cannot admit such to be the case; as I hold that every thing taught and appointed by our Redeemer, is of *essential* importance in His Church. I am commanded to keep the *faith*, and earnestly to contend for it. Concerning the authority of the Christian *Priesthood*, I am told that no man ought to take it upon himself; and in reference to the mode of addressing God in *public worship*, I am not sure that I can well consider it

to be a matter of indifference, since it is certainly one of the most solemn and important employments in which a man can engage, and, therefore, ought not to be done in *any* way that chance may suggest, or prejudice may recommend. But it is in regard to the *system of doctrines*, the *mode of worship*, and the *authority of the Ministry*, that Episcopalians differ from all the religious denominations and sects around them. I must, therefore, ask once more, What is meant by *essentials* and *non-essentials* in religion? If this cannot be readily answered, I should reply in more general terms thus: If it be only in *non-essentials*, that Episcopalians and others are not agreed, then one or other of the parties must be much to blame, for keeping up an unseemly division in the Christian world, on account of trifles. But I cannot bring myself to think, that the points of difference, embracing, as they do, the *Doctrines*, *Worship*, and *Ministry* of the Church, are of trifling importance; and this is the very reason why I cannot consent to join any of the religious denominations around me. Let those who maintain that the points of difference are not of essential importance, explain how they can justify their conduct, in keeping up division, by refusing to join the Episcopal Church, which, according to their own shewing, is right in *essentials*. Their conduct, in this respect,

is certainly calculated to excite surprise, and it requires explanation. To put an end to the dispute, I should conclude thus : As you seem to think, that there is no essential difference between us—which I yet cannot admit—you can have no valid objection to what I would propose, as a means of healing the breach between us. Let the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles, be taken as evidence of the construction, which those holy and inspired men put upon the doctrines and institutions of our ever-blessed Lord ; and further, let the constant preaching and practice of Christians, for the first three hundred years afterwards, be admitted as the commentary on the acts and writings of the Apostles, and I have no objection to give up, as non-essential, any doctrine or practice which I may now hold or respect, if clearly condemned by this evidence ; if you, on the other hand, will consent to embrace every doctrine and practice, that may be fully established on the same authority. This I am ready to do, in order that all differences may be determined ; and if you will not consent to these terms, you ought, at least, to refrain from laying the blame upon me, of maintaining an unseemly schism in the religious world ; and this the more, as you assert, that the points of difference are non-essential, which I do not admit to be the case^x.

^x Vide Note D.

Q. But will you not, by such strictness, lay yourself open to the charge of bigotry?

A. A bigot is one who holds opinions for which he can assign no reason; or a bigot is one who violently and unjustly condemns all but his own party. Now I hold no principle for which I cannot give a reason. My rule is to "prove all things;" therefore, if "to hold fast that which is good;" if to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" subject me to the charge of bigotry, it can be urged only by those who have no correct knowledge of the marks of truth, or by those who feel no sincere regard for the truth in its primitive purity. If I am branded as a bigot on this account, I have the consolation to know, that it is for adhering closely to the pattern exhibited in the Old and New Testaments, and venerated by faithful Christians, from the Apostles, downwards. Were I anxious to support the views of a party, I should accuse myself of bigotry; but I care for no party, but that of the Apostles, and their faithful successors, in all ages; and I adhere to the Protestant Episcopal Church, because it can be clearly proved to be Apostolic in its Doctrines, Ordinances, and Ministry. Were it not so, it would have no support from me, nor from any member of its Communion, who is at all acquainted with his principles as a Churchman. If

men say all manner of evil against me, on account of these principles, I am willing to bear it with patience; but as a sincere Christian, I cannot pay any regard to the accusations of such men. Again; I condemn no man, because his creed may be different from mine; although I consider it a duty to remind all, that salvation is promised only on the condition of a full reception of the great and leading doctrines of the Gospel. I am willing to hope, that the errors of every one are but trifling, and that there is some alleviating cause for all of them; but I must remind all, that it is not by what *I may hope*, that this matter is to be determined, but by what *God has revealed*. I may hope, even in cases where there is much cause for fear; and, although charity teaches me to judge favourably, yet this ought not to prevent me from warning every man to judge himself, that he be not judged of the Lord. I am ready to allow, that many who differ from me in religious principle, are men of strict integrity, pure morality, and extensive charity; and yet I dare not give the least encouragement to such, to suppose that it is safe to live in the habitual and positive neglect of one point of the Law, or one mark of the true Church, how much soever they may attend to their duty in every other respect. No man can yet determine, what might be the effect

of such neglect, upon that state of existence for which the present is merely a preparation. I willingly admit, that many who are not of the Church to which I belong, adorn the Christian character, by conduct in almost every respect more commendable, than is displayed by many who belong to her Communion; but still it would be worse than folly, were I so far to deceive myself or others, as to suppose, that separation from the Church was not very wrong and very dangerous; or that schism and division did not betray a carnal mind, and a rebellious spirit. I cheerfully bear testimony that many have such a regard, for what they conscientiously believe to be the truth, and make such laudable exertions in promoting its cause, as leaves no room to doubt, that whereinsoever they err, it is through ignorance, and that if they were better acquainted with some of the marks of truth, they would respect them as highly as they do those with which they are more conversant; but this ought not to prevent me from telling them candidly, and in a true Christian spirit, in what things they still come short, and stating plainly to them, those principles, which I verily believe they do not embrace, merely because they have never been taught either to know or to appreciate them. And I sincerely believe, that such as err through igno-

rance, which they have no opportunity of removing, but who discharge their duties according to the extent of their knowledge and ability, will be received into the kingdom of the Father ; while many, who outwardly belong to the Church, but who take no care to act as worthy members of her Communion, will be shut out from the realms of light, and hear the awful sentence, " Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity^y;" but I could not, on account of this belief, encourage any one to fold his hands, and sit down in contented ignorance; or to suppose that he is blameless, if he embrace not every opportunity of increasing his knowledge of those things which a Christian ought to know and believe, to his soul's health. Holding these opinions, and not pretending to judge any man, I ought not to be branded as a bigot, merely because I solemnly revere what I perceive to have the marks of truth; and because I will not yield a single step from what I hold to be the path of duty, nor give my countenance to any religious system which I believe to be either defective or erroneous. Were I to give way a single step in this matter, where should I stop? If to please men or gain applause, I yield to one who is *scarcely* wrong, he who is a *little further* from the truth, would have an equal right to call on me to

^y "Many shall come from the east," &c. St. Matt. viii. 11.

proceed his length also. I should thus have to go on step by step, till all the leading doctrines and principles of Christianity would be left far behind. I do not try my own principles by one rule, and another man's by another. I decide neither my own nor his by the rule of private judgment, but by the marks of truth, which are infallibly correct. Were I to try others by a rule which I would not admit in my own case, it would be bigotry and injustice; but to me and to every Episcopalian, such procedure would be detestable. We are even disposed to try our own principles with the utmost rigour, and we are not afraid to empanel a jury from among our fiercest enemies, and all that we require of them is strict attention to candour and truth. Thus if he only is a bigot, who can give no good reason of the hope that is in him, I leave it to those who accuse me to determine, whether they can shew clearer marks of the truth than I have pointed out. If he only is a bigot, who condemns others without trial, and justifies himself without a full investigation of his principles, I leave it to those who accuse me to determine, whether they will submit their principles to be tried by the same rule as I try my own, or whether they can justly accuse me of bigotry, for adhering to what I believe to be true. "We must not be frightened by terms, nor scared at watch-

words of abuse. We may be taunted with exclusiveness, but if our exclusiveness is the exclusiveness of truth, we cannot help it, and we cannot regret it; for it is the very nature of truth to be exclusive. The truth, which should admit alliance with error; or which, instead of being one and unchangeable, should be fluctuating and manifold; or, in other words, the truth which should not be exclusive, would be no longer truth. In such a cause, then, a man must be determined if he be in earnest, and must be in earnest if he is conscientious. We see every thing in Christianity which enjoins an inflexible adherence to 'sound doctrine,' and 'the form of sound words;' we see nothing in the Gospel which inculcates a spurious liberality at the expense of faith and truth^z. Were there any thing really blameable in strict adherence to these matters; were the honour of God not considered; the merits of the Redeemer not recognized; the word of God not revered; were any doctrines inculcated, whose truth I was restrained from investigating; or any practices recommended, whose tendency was not to prepare me for heaven, or whose conformity to the spirit of the Gospel, and the opinions of those who lived in the earliest days of Christianity, was of a doubtful nature; I should certainly be less anxious to remain

^z British Crit.—July, 1834.

stedfast. But when this is not the case; when the principles of the Church forcibly lead her members to Christ, as the only Fountain of knowledge and authority — the great Prophet, Priest, and King in His Church; when her Liturgy, Articles, and Occasional Offices, do, one and all, represent man, as lost in Adam, but encouraged to hope for salvation through the atoning blood, and prevailing intercession of Christ; as naturally very far gone from original righteousness, and inclined to evil continually, but on account of his union with Christ, as renewed and sanctified in his nature by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit; when all her holy Offices and Services continually remind us, that we are justified before God, through faith in the promises made to us through Christ, and not by any works of our own; and that, on account of our thus being esteemed righteous, we are united to Christ, and adopted into the family of God the Father, where our fidelity is proved, and all our spiritual wants are supplied; and where, if found faithful, we have the fullest assurance, that for Christ's sake we shall receive a glorious reward, every man according to his works; and finally, when the various Offices of the Church uniformly assure us, that God ordinarily works through the instrumentality of *means*, which He Himself has

appointed for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes; and that the means through which He intends to accomplish our salvation, are all to be found in His Church, and placed within the reach of His servants, and peculiarized by the promise of His blessing: when her daily and annual courses of Services, constantly set before those who regularly worship within her courts, a full and distinct outline of the great scheme of human redemption, and of all its important details; when, in every sense, the Church teaches us to be humble in our own eyes, and to give all glory to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and when she graciously instructs her members in the whole revealed *will of God*, kindly administers to them all the divinely-instituted *means of grace*, and with true maternal care, sends out her servants, with whom her Lord and Redeemer has promised to be for ever *present*, to feed her flocks, and gather her lambs^a; I certainly cannot see how I could betray indifference to her cause, or stray from her Communion, without blame and without sin.

Q. Are there any minor reasons why you should love and venerate the Scottish Episcopal Church?

A. Yes, many: no one in the least acquainted with Ecclesiastical history, can contemplate the Scottish

^a Isaiah xl. 11.

Episcopal Church, without being sensible that associations of the most interesting description are closely interwoven with its name. It is the slender remains of the Church, as it was originally instituted in the land. Its history stretches away into times bordering on the Apostolic age. It was the Church of our fathers long previous to its subjugation to Rome, and long before the errors of the middle ages were introduced into its courts. It is the Church, which our fathers, at a later period, rescued from Papal thralldom, and restored to primitive freedom: the Church, on whose account they were, at a still more modern date, willing to suffer persecution, to lose their worldly goods, and to go to prison, or into exile. The history of the country is interwoven with the history of its fortunes. The ruins of Iona proclaim its early fame: the mouldering fragments and broken arches of its once proud Cathedrals, bespeak both its former splendour, and its departed greatness. Further, if we turn our attention to the Services of the Church, the mind must be affected in no ordinary degree. These are not of modern date. Our fathers, in their generations, for 1800 years, poured out their souls to God in the Forms which we still use. The Prayers, the Collects, the Litanies of the Church, have come down to us, hallowed by the spirit and piety of the

earliest and purest ages. Thousands upon thousands, in every age, have held sweet converse with their Saviour and their God, in these hallowed Forms; so that we, with our ancestors, and they with us, are thus, in a manner, united in one holy communion—the communion of saints in the service of God. In the days of the Church's palmy prosperity, the anthems which we use, resounded through her lofty temples; in the days of her deep distress, they were chaunted in her lowly meeting-houses; and now, in the days of her peace and humility, they are sung in her plain but decent churches. Thus, within the courts of the Church, and by means of her sacred Services, our forefathers, through good report and through evil report, prepared themselves for that happy state, which, through the Redeemer's merits, will be their portion for ever; and we continue to follow them in the path of duty, and in the hopes of having along with them our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, at the general resurrection in the last day. And can any of Scotia's children contemplate this—the Church of their country, and their fathers, and their Redeemer, and their God—with feelings of indifference? Can they think lightly of any thing connected with her Services, or her history, or her fortunes? No! Even if they have forsaken her Communion, and left her

border, they can scarcely, without a species of sacrilege, speak or even think ill of that Church, in whose bosom their ancestors, for so many generations, were trained up in the faith of the Gospel, and for the kingdom of the Father; and if they abide in her Communion, and attend to her Services, they will find room for much joy and gratitude: for within her courts the grand scheme of human salvation is constantly exhibited: the whole of God's revealed word is read: the high doctrines of the Sacraments are inculcated: the Apostolical succession is preserved: Confession, Absolution, and Fasting, or Penance, are duly, though not superstitiously, practised: and the Fasts and Festivals, which mark the principal events of our blessed Lord's life, and draw us on to the discharge of every Christian duty, are religiously observed. Were there no other reason for loving and venerating the ancient Scottish Church, her Prayer-Book alone, would greatly attach every sincere and faithful Christian to her Communion. It embraces almost the whole volume of Revelation: it contains and preserves the true Christian Creed, in every important doctrine: and it makes provision for the due administration of every holy Ordinance, through which the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are conveyed to the soul. Thus, within the courts of

the Church is to be found every thing "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Be his piety ever so ardent, the Christian will here find all that he can desire, either to his advancement in holiness upon earth, or for his preparation for the society of saints and angels, and the presence of the ever-blessed Jehovah, in the kingdom of heaven. To be a member of Christ's holy Church, is therefore, not merely a duty, but also an inestimable gift and privilege, which the Christian cannot too highly prize. Many of Scotland's sons and daughters may, through ignorance or thoughtlessness, hold this, her ancient Church, in little esteem. Many have left her, probably to return no more, probably to brand with the epithet of bigot those who remain stedfast. Would to God, that they would give the matter that consideration which it deserves, and, if conscious of mistake, that they would not wantonly deride those who abide by their duty without wavering, nor be deterred by false shame from confessing their error, nor restrained by worldly motives from yielding to conviction. To such I would say; Nay, my fellow Christians, be not averse to search for the truth, nor hindered by any consideration from embracing it,

when found. Like Agrippa, you may be “almost persuaded” to yield to the arguments in its favour; like the Jews of old, you may be “cut to the heart,” when you hear the marks of the Church of God defined. Put not off the consideration of the important matter to a more convenient season, lest such season never arrive: but instantly inquire what you must do to be assured that you belong to the communion of the true Church of God. The advice which I thus offer to others, may God, of His mercy, enable me to apply to myself, viz. Prove all things; cleave to that which is good: put away prejudice, and be guided by candour: seek the favour of God more than the applause of men: and when you have found the truth, abide by it until death.

Q. Good Christian: You have satisfied me that you are well acquainted with the reasons of your adherence to the Protestant Episcopal Church, and certainly no one who has the least regard for the honour and service of God, ought to be ignorant of the dignity and importance of the Christian Church. Without knowledge concerning this matter, the Christian must be like a wave of the sea, tossed about by every wind of doctrine. But you are well acquainted with the marks of the Church; great, then, must be your fault if you slight any of them. They were inscribed by the finger of God.

The man who would efface them, the man who would slight them, is venturing to dispute the wisdom of the Almighty, and to tamper with his own happiness. But you are aware of this; all then that I would wish to know is, whether you think that the mere circumstance of being within the border of the Church is sufficient to secure your salvation?

A. The Church on earth is meant to train me up for the Church in heaven, and all her laws and institutions are meant, not to impose a task upon me, but to preserve me in the path of life. The mere circumstance of being within the Church, therefore, is advantageous to me, only in so far as it places me within reach of that instruction and that assistance, which are necessary to prepare me for heaven. But if I do not avail myself of these advantages, and employ them for the purpose for which they are intended, I can never be fit for the society of heaven. "Not every one that sayeth unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." In the field of God's Church, there are tares as well as wheat. The word of truth is sown, but it is only in a few that it bears fruit. From some the wicked one catcheth it away; others fall away in times of tribulation and persecution; the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches,

make many very regardless of their duty to God; while those who remain stedfast, and walk worthy of their high vocation, do not all bring forth fruit alike, but some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty. I therefore consider it my duty, as a member of Christ's Church, to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, studying *the Divine word*, which shines as a lamp to guide me on the way to heaven; praying to God to give me His *grace*, that I may be enabled to run with patience the race that is set before me; and trusting in the Redeemer, Who is *God with us*, to bring me, under His victorious banner, into the kingdom of the Father.

“O Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy Church and Household continually in Thy true religion: that they who do lean upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by Thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen^b.”

^b Collect for Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.



APPENDIX.

ON account of what is said in answer to the Question, "But there are other Communities, the religious houses of which may be near at hand; could you not attend public worship in any of these?" it has fallen to my lot, as I have heard, to be branded as an illiberal and narrow-minded bigot. This would have been allowed to pass without remark from me, had it not at the same time been alleged, that the principles which I advocated, in that particular paragraph, afford a proof of the intolerant and uncharitable spirit of the Church of which I am a member. It is on this account that I proceed to defend my position.

In the *first part* of my little work, I had distinctly stated what the *Marks or Notes* of the Church were, and shewn that they were all clearly recognized in the word of God: and, as a practical duty resulting from the premises thus laid down and established, I, in the *second part*, admonished Episcopalians to adhere stedfastly to what was thus proved to be a pure and integral portion of the Church of the living God.

Now had I forbidden men to "prove all things," before I admonished them to "hold fast that which is good;" had

I sought to restrain them from investigating the principles of any religious society, before I advised them to abide by their own; had I prohibited them from joining themselves to another religious community, if they should, after due investigation, find it purer and better than that in which they had been brought up; then might the charge of illiberality and bigotry have been very justly preferred against me. If men were in search of the true Church, I should certainly not dissuade them from making themselves acquainted with the marks and principles of any religious society, nor from attending any place of worship in order to satisfy themselves in regard to these matters; but if no such object is in view; if it is merely to gratify idle curiosity, or to save a little trouble, or to yield to a spirit of indifference, or to go thoughtlessly along with the multitude; then I fearlessly maintain, that such motives are inconsistent with that regard for truth which the Christian ought to feel, and with the value of that reward for which he ought to be preparing. But, in very deed, I asked no one to adhere to principles until he had ascertained that they were well founded. As a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church, I could not have done otherwise; for, as I shall shew before I have done, this Church wishes none of her members to hold a single principle on the ground either of ignorance or of indifference.

But have those who blame me, considered the result to which their accusation would lead? I suspect that it involves a charge which they would be afraid to press,

and ashamed to countenance. Let us see. They condemn me for having taught Episcopalians, after having investigated the marks by which the true Church has always been distinguished, to abide faithfully by her Communion. Now the question, whether I was justified in giving such an advice, must be determined by an authority, from which neither I, nor my opponents, can reasonably appeal. In God's holy Word, the following passages are to be found: "Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest^a." "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein^b." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good^c." "Ye should contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints^d." "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called: endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace^e." "The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers^f." "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them^g." "By One Spirit are we all baptized into One body—that there should be no schism in the body—now ye are the body

^a Deut. xii. 13.

^c 1 Thess. v. 21.

^e Eph. iv. 1, &c.

^g Rom. xvi. 17.

^b Jer. vi. 16.

^d Jude 3.

^f 2 Tim. iv. 3.

of Christ^h." "Abide in Meⁱ." "Be ye faithful unto death^k." If their true and impartial meaning be allowed to these passages, it certainly does appear to me, that they contain sufficient authority for the full establishment of every thing that I said. Let those who have found fault be the judges: will they then venture to involve in their condemnation, these portions of Holy Scripture on which my principles are founded, and by which they are established? Unless they are prepared to do this—and I know some of them would recoil with horror at the bare mention of such a thing—is it not rather unfair to attempt to throw discredit on the principles of the Church, merely because I have not feared to act by the rule of moral duty, which forbids me to sacrifice the cause of truth and righteousness at the shrine of popular applause and morbid sensibility: merely because I have not hesitated to act by the rule of Christian obligation, which requires of me to declare the whole counsel of God, without fear or regard of the consequences?

But as the Church teaches her members to do as they would be done by, and to live peaceably, as far as in them lies, with all men; I would not willingly nor purposely say a single word to offend any one; and if I have said such, I am ready to retract it, if it has been said without good reason or due consideration; but if my offence hath only this extent, that I have brought forward a truth

^h 1 Cor. xii. 13, &c.

ⁱ St. John xv. 4.

^k Rev. ii. 10.

clearly revealed, although highly unfavourable to popular notions, I feel that it is no longer my duty to sue for favour, nor to shrink from obloquy, nor to consult my own quiet. As a faithful soldier and servant of Christ, I am, at all hazards, to maintain and defend every thing connected with the Religion and Church of Christ, so that they may descend pure and intact to the next generation. Adopting the Apostle's language, I may say, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth¹?" If I know my own mind, and am guided by the principles in which, as a member of the Church, I have been brought up, I yield to no man in Christian charity: I extend it to all, and therefore must, to the utmost of my power, do good to all. But I do not conceive, that the most unbounded charity includes indifference to the truth, or a disposition to conceal a single Catholic verity, from those who may differ from me. St. Paul recommended charity, and told his converts, that without this grace, all other graces and virtues would be of no avail; yet St. Paul never shrunk from reproofing indifference, nor from recommending strict adherence to Evangelical truth and Apostolical fellowship. Our blessed Lord Himself, who was meek as a lamb, and the friend of all men, never encouraged any one in error, nor hesitated to declare the whole truth, nor allowed any one to suppose it safe to trifle with a single doctrine, institution, or law, of the Almighty.

In answer to the charge, that the Episcopal Church

¹ Gal. iv. 16.

of Scotland is of an intolerant spirit, it may be sufficient to state, that the Church has no wish to impose on her members, or others, a single principle not fully recognized in the word of God; and hence, that her members could have no interest in fostering party spirit, in regard to matters affecting their own, or other men's eternal welfare. The Church would advise all, but she seeks to compel none. She asks no man to embrace her principles, till he has proved their soundness; nor to adhere to her Communion, till he has rigidly examined the marks by which she is known to be the Spouse of the Lord. Her members are prepared to adopt the language of a distinguished living Prelate. "Her foundations," says Bishop Mant, "we stedfastly believe, are upon the holy hills. But we ask not of you a blind acquiescence in that belief. We exhort you, to do as we have done—search the Scriptures: examine the records of Ecclesiastical antiquity: compare with them the principles and practices of our national Church of *England and Ireland*. If, after a dispassionate and patient investigation, you conscientiously believe her to be a traitress to Him, whose honour she professes to maintain: if her Sacraments be of human institution: if her Doctrines have their origin in human conceit: if her Ministers be unauthorized intruders into their sacred office; if her Liturgy be a remnant of superstition, or an inanimate and unedifying form; come out from the midst of her, and be ye separate: renounce, forsake, abjure her. But if, on the other hand, you are rationally persuaded

that she is indeed a holy Church, not unworthy of being accounted the Church of the living God ; cherish her as you would the apple of your eye. For her sake, for the sake of her Redeemer, for the sake of your own salvation ; cling to her, and desert her not. If her Sacraments be Christ's ordinances, receive them as the water of salvation, and the bread of life : if her Doctrines be Evangelical, continue to hold fast her form of sound words ; if her Priesthood be Apostolical, persevere in seeking knowledge at their lips : if her Liturgy be Scriptural, after that way — however misnamed by others—worship ye the God of your fathers^m." *This surely is not the language of BIGOTRY.*

Further; the members of the Scottish Episcopal Church are ready to adopt the language of an American Divine, a champion of the Church, with whom her adversaries have not yet ventured to measure weapons. "It can never with justice be said of me," writes Dr. Chapman, "that I would gladly lay an interdict on the indulgence of any doctrines, or on the expression of any sentiments. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and, according to that persuasion, let him preach, rebuke, and exhort. He shall receive no abuse, no molestation from me : and what I accord to others, I claim for myself—the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free ; the liberty of honestly entertaining, and honestly and charitably publishing, my own views of Christian doctrines and Christian institutions, without

^m "The Church and her Ministrations," by Bp. Mant. Disc. III.

being accountable to any human being, but to God alone. I do not question the piety of numerous individuals belonging to Churches of human origin and invention; I do not assert, for my own conscience would condemn me if I did, that they cannot become the heirs of eternal life. I am rather sensible, that the Apostle applies to those divisions and parties which existed among the Corinthians, this remarkable expression, 'If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire:' and hence, I abjure the thought of consigning to everlasting perdition, large bodies of men, numbers of whom I am happy to believe, live under the influence of the Divine grace, and evince great advances in faith and holiness. But, at the same time, this does not convince me, that there is no such sin as schism, however ignorantly it may be indulged: nor does it abstract from the Scriptures, nor from my faith, that memorable admonition of Paul, 'There should be no schism in the body:' and again; 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular;' that body which he elsewhere terms, *THE CHURCH*, and affirms of *CHRIST*, that *HE IS ITS HEAD^m*." *This surely is not the language of INTOLERANCE.*

But this is the language in which the Ministers of the Church instruct her members: and it is language in strict accordance with the principles which the Church both embraces and maintains.

^m Sermons upon the Ministry, &c. of the Protestant Episcopal Church. By G. T. Chapman, D.D. Sermon I.

Such being the case, one may be permitted to ask of those who would wish it to be believed that the spirit of the Episcopal Church is bigotted and intolerant, what their object, in so doing, really is? Do they mean to encourage the notion, that a little personal convenience, or careless indifference, or worldly interest, or accidental alliance; or, it may be, a wish to give a little annoyance to their Christian Pastor; is sufficient reason for encouraging division in the Church of the living God, or for imitating those who yielded to a wicked spirit, and left their own habitationⁿ? Do they mean tacitly and indirectly to weaken men's respect for the word of God, and the institutions of our blessed Lord, by thus endeavouring to betray themselves and others into the belief, that indifference is liberality; that laxity of principle is true Christian charity; that schism is not sin; and that scriptural truth is to yield to popular opinion? If so, let them frankly and candidly avow their motive, so that the unwary may be put on their guard, and the faithful Christian know how to treat doctrines so covertly, yet so directly, leading to infidelity.

But perhaps they may say, as one did say to myself, That FAITH IN CHRIST, is the great means through which Christians are to be saved. This the members of the Episcopal Church both know and acknowledge; but they also know and maintain, that faith without love, is of no use^o; and that love includes obedience^p; and

ⁿ St. Jude 6.

^o St. James ii. 17, &c.

^p St. John xiv. 15.

that the great rule of obedience, laid down by our blessed Lord, in regard to His Church, is, that His disciples abide in it^a; His earnest prayer, in its behalf, that its members may be joined in perfect unity^r: and hence, that none of His servants are ever to be guilty of the sin of schism, which proceeds from a carnal mind^s; for the carnal mind is at enmity against God^t. Episcopalians, therefore, believe that true saving faith must, as in the case of Abraham, always produce ready obedience^u. Hence, as the very essence of true faith is, a full assurance that what God has promised, He is able also to perform^x; so its fruits must appear, in a ready reception of all the truths that He has revealed, an entire reliance on all the Ordinances that He has instituted, and a complete submission to all the laws that He has enacted. But in this, Episcopalians perceive a profound regard for all the *marks* of His holy Church—its Doctrines, its Ordinances, its Constitution and Government: and therefore they conclude, that a lively faith in Christ, comprehends a sincere endeavour to preserve and promote unity in “the Church, which is His body^y.”

And are the members of the Church to be blamed for openly avowing these principles? “I have learnt,” says Dr. Chapman, whose language has already

^a St. John xv. 4.

^s 1 Cor. iii. 3.

^u Gen. xii. 4; Heb. xii. 8. 17.

^y Eph. i. 22.

^r St. John xvii. 20, &c.

^t Rom. viii. 7.

^x Rom. iv. 21, &c.

been quoted, "I have learnt, indeed, that Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, never hesitated, on all suitable occasions, to discourse freely and unreservedly upon all the errors, whether of faith or practice, by which His hearers were liable to be seduced; and I breathe no wish for higher authority, to exculpate me for presenting the fullest information upon the subject I have undertaken to discuss. Abuse is one thing, but argument is another. Misstatements are to be severely reprehended; but important facts are worthy of all acceptation. To pretend that they are sometimes of such a nature, that they cannot be conveyed in the spirit of meekness and humility, of charity and brotherly kindness, is altogether idle and extravagant^z."

What shall I say, then, to those who have accused me, and the Church through me, of a desire to foster an intolcrant spirit? Shall I accuse them in return? That be far from me! The language of St. Paul shall be mine: "With me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self^a." If I have set down aught contrary to the word of God; or been betrayed into expressions at variance with the gentle spirit of the Gospel; let such be pointed out, and they shall immediately be retracted: but until this is done, I must be allowed to express my conviction, that the leading facts

^z Vide Sermons.

^a 1 Cor. iv. 3.

and arguments which I have stated, are founded on the word of truth, and, therefore, utterly incapable of being refuted.

In conclusion, I frankly and fully forgive all who have called my principles in question. Had I not been aware, that their remarks were likely to do some injury to Christ's holy Church, by their influence on those who probably have not thought very deeply on the subject, or who have been so far deceived by names, as to mistake for Christian graces, what the sacred Scriptures teach us to look upon as the offspring of the carnal mind; I certainly should have heard with patience and in silence, all that could have been uttered or insinuated against me. As it is, I have the satisfaction to know and to feel, that I have been prompted by nought of malice or party spirit, but wholly by a regard for the sacred doctrines and institutions of our blessed Lord, in all that I have written on this very important subject.

NOTES.

IN the following Notes, various doctrines are compared with the Divine word, and with each other. This is done, certainly not with the view of provoking controversy, but for the purpose of enabling the members of the Church to understand distinctly, some of the points of faith on which they *essentially* differ from other religious communities; and be able to give a reason, why they cannot unite, in things spiritual, with any of the various denominations around them. Episcopalians speak, and even pray, against divisions and schisms; and, therefore, they ought to be able to state distinctly, why they continue separate from the Presbyterians, on the one hand; and from the Roman Catholics, on the other. It is quite a mistaken notion, that the *sole* cause of this is to be found in the mode of Church government. Such is not the case. The separation is maintained on account of doctrinal differences also; and these, too, of so important a character, that no one, who has the least regard for consistency, or any correct notion of the importance of Evangelical truth, can treat them with indifference. It is often thoughtlessly asserted, that in *essential* doctrines, all are agreed. This is not true;

and such assertion, if not made in utter ignorance of facts, must be adduced with the view of checking inquiry, or of deceiving the unwary. *Every doctrine of the Gospel is essential*; and, as far as can be gathered from Revelation, *the reception* of every doctrine of the Gospel is essential to the due preparation for the happiness which Christ has purchased for the world. It is impossible to embrace two different systems of doctrine at the same time; and, consequently, it must be impious to draw near to God, either with a double mind, or in support of a system, of which the worshipper does not conscientiously approve.

In stating any doctrine or opinion held by those who do not belong to the Protestant Episcopal Church, no comment shall be offered. It is not the object of this treatise to *attack* the doctrines of any man or any party, but simply to *state* them; and also to state the *reasons* which prevent Episcopalians from embracing them. This is necessary, in order that the Episcopalian may be able to vindicate his conduct in keeping aloof from one and all of the religious communities around him. Were a Presbyterian, for example, to ask an Episcopalian, why he did not join the communion of the Kirk of Scotland; the Episcopalian is, in a manner, called on to give a reason. The same would be the case, were a Romanist to ask him, why he had thrown off his allegiance to Rome. Now, although it might be sufficient to reply, in general terms, to the former, that Episcopalians cannot, in a solemn manner, sanction a

creed, whose fundamental articles appear to them to be at variance with the word of God; and, to the latter, that they could never agree to the Romish doctrines established by the decree of the Council of Trent; still it would be proper that every Episcopalian be prepared to state particularly, some of the Presbyterian doctrines, which appear to him to be so at variance with the word of God, as utterly to prevent him from embracing them; and also, some of the articles of the Romish creed, against which the faithful member of the Church Catholic, considers it his duty decidedly to protest.

In the following Notes, therefore, the doctrines of both the Presbyterians and Romanists are stated, in the words of their authorized Formularies; and in the opposite column, some of the Scriptural texts are inserted, which appear so conclusive, as to prevent the Episcopalian from embracing the doctrine under review; or the doctrine of the Church of England is shewn, by being placed in juxta-position to that maintained by the opposite party. The *Notes*, therefore, contain matters of fact; not subject of controversy.

NOTE A.

"Holy Scripture has been so expounded, that one part of it becomes repugnant to the other."

Quotations from the "Confession of Faith."

"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These men and angels, thus predestinated and foreordained, and particularly and unchangeably designed: and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Quotations from the Word of God, which appear to Episcopals to be irreconcilable with the doctrines of the "Confession of Faith."

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. "Doth God pervert judgment; or doth the Almighty pervert justice?" Job viii. 3. "The just Lord is in the midst thereof, He will not do iniquity." Zeph. iii. 5. "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.—The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Ps. cxlv. 9. 17. "Ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal; Hear now, O House of Israel, Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them: for his ini-

*Confession of Faith.**Holy Scripture.*

quity that he hath done shall he die. Again; When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn and live ye." Ezek. xviii. 25, &c. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mark ii. 17. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance." Lukexv.17. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Gen. iv. 7.

"Neither are any other redeemed by Christ,—but the elect only."

"Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." 2 Tim. ii. 6. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2.

Confession of Faith.

“All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His Word and Spirit.” “Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit; yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.”

“Neither are any other justified but the elect only.”

“Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing,

Holy Scripture.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” St. Matt. xi. 28.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.” St. Mark xvi. 15.

“Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And, therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on

Confession of Faith.

or any other Evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him, and His righteousness by faith: which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God."

"All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son, Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption; by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges, of the children of God."

"The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself, even to

Holy Scripture.

Him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

"Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. iv. 20, &c.; v. 18.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." St. John i. 12.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii. 38.

"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth He any man." St. James i. 15. "O

Confession of Faith.

the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it, a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends ; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God."

" They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace ; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

Holy Scripture.

Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help." Hos. xiii. 9. "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it ? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ?" Isa. v. 4. "Ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye House of Israel, I will judge every one after his ways." Ezek. xxxiii. 20.

" Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x. 12. " The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression ; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness ; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth." Ezek. xxxiii. 12.

*Confession of Faith.**Holy Scripture.*

"Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." St. Luke xxi. 36.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10.

 NOTE B.

"No Christian should ever think of trying the steadiness of his Ecclesiastical principles, by frequenting places of worship among those whose opinions are at variance with his own."

Romish Doctrines.

"I profess that there are truly and properly seven Sacraments of the new Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, although not all for every one: viz. Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unc-

Anglican Doctrines.

"How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church? Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." Catechism.

N. B. Confirmation, Penance, Orders, and Matrimony, are *sacred Rites*,

Romish Doctrines.

tion, Orders, and Matrimony." Creed.

" I profess, that in the Mass, there is offered to God, a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice, for the living and the dead ; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and there is made a conversion of the whole substance of

Anglican Doctrines.

which some Protestants have denominated *Sacramentals*, because they are Divine institutions, through which the grace of God is conveyed to the individuals more immediately concerned ; but they differ from the two great Sacraments, through the former of which, the children of Adam are admitted into the family of God ; and through the latter, this holy family is nourished and supported.

" The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual : and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone : wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have

Romish Doctrines.

the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood : which conversion, the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess, that under either kind alone, Christ is received whole and entire, and a true Sacrament." Creed.

Anglican Doctrines.

remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." Art. 30. "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, of His tender mercy, did give His only Son Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption, who made then, by His own oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." The members of the Church, therefore, hold that our sacrifice is entirely commemorative, and wholly Eucharistical — a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—real but unbloody. Hence, in the feast upon the sacrifice, the body and blood of Christ, are verily and indeed taken and received, but only after a heavenly and spiritual manner : "inso-much, that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith

*Romish Doctrines.**Anglican Doctrines.*

receive the same, the bread which we break, is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." "Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the bread and wine, in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions." "The body of Christ, is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith." Art. 28. "The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people; for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance

Romish Doctrines.

"I constantly hold, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful."—

"Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration."

—"I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God ever Virgin, and also of other saints, may be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration is to be given them." — "I also affirm, that the power of Indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people." Creed.

"I acknowledge the Holy,

Anglican Doctrines.

and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike." Art. 30.

"The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God." Art. 22.

"As the Church of Hieru-

Romish Doctrines.

Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, for the Mother and Mistress of all Churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ." Creed.

"I undoubtedly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred Canons and General Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent."—"I do,

Anglican Doctrines.

salem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith." Art. 19. "Protestant Catholics do not acknowledge the authority of the Pope, nor yield obedience to him: neither do they admit the Church of Rome to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, but only one among the many branches of the Church of Christ. The Church of Jerusalem was obviously the Mother of all Churches^a."

"General Councils may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore, things ordained by them, as necessary to salvation, have neither

^a Vide "Church of Rome in her Primitive Purity, compared with the Church of Rome at the Present Day." By Bishop Hopkins.

Presbyterian Doctrines.

at this present, freely profess, and sincerely hold, this true Catholic Faith, without which no one can be saved." Creed.

Presbyterian Doctrines contained in the "Confession of Faith," and "Larger and Shorter Catechisms." These form a SYSTEM founded on the ETERNAL DECREE of God.

"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby, neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. By the DECREE of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others

Anglican Doctrines.

strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of Holy Scripture." Art. 21.

Doctrines of the Episcopal Church, as set forth in her Liturgy, Articles, Occasional Offices, Collects, and the Epistle and Gospel for the various Sundays, &c. throughout the year. These form a system founded on the INFINITE LOVE of God.

"God is LOVE." "He hath made all men, and hateth nothing that He hath made." "In Adam all die." "All men are conceived and born in sin." "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk; but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the

Presbyterian Doctrines.

foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Anglican Doctrines.

flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Art. 9. "The wages of sin is death." "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world." "Herein is *love*; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." "In this was manifested the *love* of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." "Behold what manner of *love* the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Hence, according to this leading feature in the system of doctrine, em-

*Presbyterian Doctrines.**Anglican Doctrines.*

braced by the Episcopal Church, the eternal purpose of God, founded on His infinite love, was—to redeem the world from the dominion of sin: and therefore, “Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed, by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour.” Art. 17. But this eternal purpose is for the good of all; for “God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.” “He declareth His Almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity.” He “calletth us mercifully to

Presbyterian Doctrines.

“ Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His *eternal and immutable purpose*, and the secret counsel and pleasure

Anglican Doctrines.

amendment, and of His endless pity, promiseth us forgiveness of what is past, if, with a perfect and true heart, we turn unto Him. For though our sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow : and though they be like purple, yet shall they be made white as wool. Turn ye, saith the Lord, from all your wickedness, and your sin shall not be your destruction. Cast away from you all your ungodliness that ye have done ; make you new hearts and a new spirit : wherefore will ye die, O ye House of Israel, seeing I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.”

“ I believe in God the Son, Who hath redeemed me and all mankind.”
 “ Almighty and everlasting God, Who of Thy tender *love* towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son our Saviour

Presbyterian Doctrines.

of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes, moving Him thereto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace." "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto: wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, but the elect only." "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign

Anglican Doctrines.

Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, that *all mankind* should follow the example of His great humility." Or in other words, "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Who of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption: Who made there, by His one oblation of Himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of *the whole world*:" "Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to Thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under

Presbyterian Doctrines.

power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."

"All those whom God hath predestinated to life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. This effectual call, is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." "Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry

Anglican Doctrines.

one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The glad tidings of the Gospel are in these terms: "Come unto Me *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel." Thus, as Christ died for all, the free gift of everlasting life is freely offered to all. Hence the ambassadors for Christ, are commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to *call all men* into the fold of His holy Church.

Presbyterian Doctrines.

of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit; yet they never truly come unto Christ; and, therefore, cannot be saved."

"Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth, by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith." "God did from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect."

Anglican Doctrines.

All who doubt not, but earnestly believe, that what God has promised through Christ, He is able also to perform, are accounted righteous in the sight of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. "We are accounted righteous before God only, *for the merit* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *by faith*, and not by our own works and deservings." *All* who thus believe with the heart, and make confession with the mouth, are justified; that is, they are accounted fit to be admitted into covenant with God, and adopted into His family. As in the case of Abraham, who staggered not at the promise of God through

Presbyterian Doctrines.

“ All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption.”

“ They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of

Anglican Doctrines.

unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: so they, being fully persuaded, that what God has promised through Christ, He is able also to perform, are justified through faith in the merits of the Redeemer. It is imputed to them for righteousness, when they believe on Him, that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

“ The ministers of Christ are authorized to baptize all who profess repentance and faith. Hence, all who believe and are baptized, are adopted into God's holy family here upon earth.”

To all who are once admitted into the Church, the grace of God's Holy Spirit is freely given if they will faithfully ask; for God “ has promised to

Presbyterian Doctrines.

grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." "This perseverance of the saints, depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election." "As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them He not only withholdeth His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin, and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass, that they harden themselves even under

Anglican Doctrines.

hear the petitions of them that ask in His Son's name," and has told His servants to ask and they shall have, to seek and they shall find. Hence, if all do not partake of the riches of God's grace through Christ, and go on to finish their course with joy, and inherit the crown which is laid up for the righteous, the fault is not God's. These doctrines are briefly summed up in the Article. "They which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works: and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to ever-

Presbyterian Doctrines.

those means which God useth for softening of others."

Anglican Doctrines.

lasting felicity." But still "after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin ; and, by the grace of God, we may arise again and amend our lives : and, therefore, they are to be condemned, which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent."

Other doctrinal points might be stated, concerning which there exists a difference of opinion among Episcopalians on the one hand, and Presbyterians on the other ; but enough has been quoted to shew, that no consistent disciple of Christ can indifferently give his sanction to either the one system or the other. There can be no halting between two opinions, by any one who believes it to be his duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

NOTE C.

Extracts from a "Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline, of the Congregational, or Independent Dissenters."

"It is not proposed to offer any *proofs, reasons, or arguments*, in support of the doctrines herein stated; but simply to *declare* what the denomination believes to be taught by the pen of inspiration." "It is not intended, that the following statement should be put forth with any authority, or as a standard to which assent should be required." "Disallowing the utility of Creeds and Articles of Religion, as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies, as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them; reserving to every

Extracts from the Articles and Canons of the Anglican Church.

"The three Creeds, Nice Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." Art. 8. "Let the preachers, above all things, be careful that they never teach aught in a sermon, to be religiously held and believed by the people, except that which is agreeable to the doctrines of the Old and New Testament, and which the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops have collected from that very doctrine." Canon of 1571. "Our most beloved Mother, the Church of England, is solicitous to avoid, with all cautious

*Declaration of the Independents
concerning Private Judgment.*

one the most perfect liberty of conscience." "Upon some minor points of doctrine and practice, they, differing among themselves, allow to each other the right to form an unbiassed judgment of the word of God." "They believe that there is no Minister and no Church among them, that would deny the substance of any one of the following doctrines of religion, though each might prefer to state his sentiments in his own way."

*Doctrine of the Church, and
Churchmen, concerning the au-
thority of the Church.*

diligence, the rock of innovators. It is her ambition to be distinguished, through the whole Christian world, under this character; that, in deciding controversies of faith and practice, it has been her fixed and firm resolution, that, in the first place, respect be had to the Scriptures, and then, in the second place, to the Bishops, Martyrs, and Ecclesiastical Writers in the first ages." Hammond.

NOTE D.

The member of the Episcopal Church is frequently accused of laying undue weight upon things, which the religious denominations and sects around him, are disposed to term *non-essentials*. But as this is a term of vague and indefinite meaning, it is highly expedient, that the Churchman should be able to form a correct judgment of what is implied by it; so that he may know how far he is really guilty of the crime laid to his

charge. Being accused of making *things indifferent* a reason for not joining the Presbyterians, the Independents, or any other sect, an Episcopalian would answer his adversary thus: "I will, in the first place, remind you," he would say, "of the necessity of being fully acquainted with the doctrines, principles, and practices, peculiar to your sect, before I am competent to decide whether I can admit your claims or not; and, as I have neither wish nor right to condemn any man or sect as heretical or schismatical, before I know exactly what the peculiar opinions and practices of the man or sect really are, I must request your permission to propose the following, or similar questions to you.

1st. As to DOCTRINES. Does the religious denomination to which you belong, hold—that the Almighty is no respecter of persons; that His *love* is over all His works; and that He desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness, and live; or, on the contrary, that He from all eternity predestinated only some men and angels unto everlasting life, and the rest to everlasting death; and that their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished, and that the happiness of the former is owing to His eternal purpose, without any foresight of faith or good works, or any other thing in the creatures, moving Him thereunto; whilst the misery of the latter is owing to the unsearchable counsel of His will, whereby He is pleased to pass by them, and ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin? Further; Do you believe that our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed *all mankind*; and that on account of His death

and sacrifice, the free gift of everlasting life is offered to all, and so that all are called on to repent, believe, be baptized, and thus have it in their power to be partakers of all the benefits of Christ's death; viz. Redemption, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and Life Eternal; or, on the contrary, Do you believe that only a certain number are redeemed by Christ, and that those not redeemed, cannot be effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, or saved; but that God exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan? Further; Has the denomination to which you belong, any fixed standard for ascertaining the true sense of God's holy word; or is it left to every one to form any system of doctrine, or to put any construction on the word of God, most agreeable to his own fancy?

2dly. As to WORSHIP. On the supposition, that "Set Forms of Prayer" and "Extempore Prayer" are both equally *lawful*, Do you think it of importance, that in the Public Services of the Sanctuary, the form should be adopted that is most calculated to set forth and preserve the great and leading doctrines of the Gospel, and to give an opportunity to every one to join in the worship of God, with the spirit and with the understanding also; or are you of opinion, that it is best to leave the Minister at liberty to make the prayers in any terms most agreeable to his own fancy, and to introduce into them any strange doctrines to which he may have a leaning? Do you think that Christians should go to church, actually and individually to *take part* in the

worship of God ; or merely to sit idly by, and listen to another preferring a prayer ? And which of these methods is the more calculated for preparing Christians to take their place among the blessed company which surrounds the throne of God ; seeing this must be one great object for which *worship* has been appointed in the Church upon earth ? Do you hold it more reverential to approach God's footstool, knowing beforehand what petitions you are to prefer ; or to address Him, not knowing what you are to pray for, or to be made to pray in terms, probably not exactly suited to your notions of propriety ? To which of these methods is your *daily* course of Services adapted ? And does your *annual* course of Services so direct the attention of the worshipper to the great events of our Lord's life, as to be a means of proving to the world, that he is not ashamed to confess Christ crucified, as his Master ; a means of exhibiting to his view, the mighty plan by which life and immortality were brought to light ? In other words ; Is the annual course of Services of your denomination, so framed as to set before you, the birth and death, the resurrection and ascension, of our blessed Lord, and all the other circumstances which may be termed the landmarks of Christianity ; and not only so, but does it embrace a full account of man's fall, and consequent misery, and of his redemption, and consequent privileges and happiness ; or is it left entirely to the discretion of your Minister, to bring these subjects forward, or not, as he may think proper ?

3dly. As to the CHURCH and the MINISTERIAL AU-

THORITY. Does the sect to which you belong, look upon the Church as a *society* or *body of which Christ is the Head*? Do you hold that the word of God recognizes only *one* such body? If only one, should agreement prevail among its members, or may it resemble a house divided against itself? If men would enjoy the privileges which Christ purchased, must they not be united to that body of which He is the Head? Do you hold that Christ alone could lay the foundations of the Church? What are your notions of the constitution of the Church? Is it a kingdom governed by duly authorized rulers? Is it a household managed by commissioned stewards? Or what do you reckon the Church to be like, and what is necessary for its preservation and peace? Do you hold that CHRIST alone has an *inherent* power to receive men into His Church? If so, Do you hold that Christ's authority is necessary before any one can act as His ambassador, and dispense the means of grace? For example; were a heathen to take it upon himself to baptize, would such baptism unite men to Christ's mystical body, the Church? If not, What authority is requisite to render valid the acts of one who appears in Christ's stead, and as His minister? From what period does your sect date its origin? How did your Ministers, at first, derive their authority? Is there any reason to conclude from the word of God, that God will bless *extraordinary* means, when the *ordinary* means of His appointment are slighted? By whom is Christ's kingdom upon earth to be governed? Do you hold that any set of men may, at any time, form a Church for themselves, and appoint some of their number to act as

their Ministers^a.—On the supposition that the first Christians were Presbyterians or Independents, can you give any account of the *reason* why they proved unfaithful to their principles, or of the *time* when they resolved to abandon Presbyterianism and adopt Episcopacy? If so unfaithful in this respect, how can we know that they did not also corrupt the Scriptures of truth, or change the holy Ordinances through which Divine grace is communicated?—Perhaps you will reply, “God would not permit His Word and Sacraments to be corrupted.” But what is the historical fact? It is,—that God has indeed preserved His Word, and Sacraments, and Ministry, in some parts of His Church; but that there is no reason to conclude, that in every part of Christendom, He will miraculously interfere to preserve any one of these. Nay, on the contrary, history informs us, that attempts have successfully been made to vitiate or conceal His word, and to alter and deteriorate the means of grace; in like manner as they have been made, particularly in latter days, to slight and despise the authority of His Ministry, and the mode of government originally instituted in His Church. But did God in any of these cases miraculously interfere? Due warning He has indeed given to all, of the benefits which must accrue to them, if they faithfully respect the sacred character of these things, and the loss they must sustain if they despise them. For these reasons, Do you not perceive, that supposed infidelity on the part of

^a Saul would not wait the arrival of Samuel, but constituted himself a Priest; but he was not a gainer: in such a case, obedience is better than sacrifice.

the early Christians, in regard to Church government, and the authority of the Priesthood, would be fatal to the claims of purity and integrity which we demand for the word of God, and the holy Sacraments, and many other things connected with Christian faith and practice? Do you not think, that it would betray want of faith in the goodness and providence of God to argue, that peculiar circumstances might occur to form *reasonable ground of necessity* for assuming the Ministerial authority, and forming a Church, independent of the ordinary and instituted means? Where such supposed necessity has existed, would not patience, with humble trust in God's mercy, for a short time, have proved that the defect might have been supplied in the way of God's own appointment? Is not rashness in regard to things sacred, very much reprobated in Holy Scripture?

These, or similar questions, are to be proposed, not from factious motives — far from it; nor with the view of stirring up controversy — far from it: but they are to be proposed for the simple purpose of shewing, that the points in dispute, between Episcopalians and others, are not of that *non-essential* character which some may suppose. By these questions, none will be condemned for holding their opinions, be what they may; whilst Episcopalians may be able, by means of the same questions, to convince their adversaries that it is not merely about trifles that there is any dispute. Neither the opinions nor the prejudices of any man need be assailed; but, at the same time, it is expedient that the principles of the Episcopalian be not shaken by the vague assertion that it is only about things indifferent that he

contends ; an assertion, which these queries will probably convince, even those who adduce it, to be gratuitous and false. As true faith is the only source from which blameless practice can flow ; so correct knowledge of the principles and opinions of adverse parties, is the only means by which Churchmen can be convinced of the reasonableness of their conduct, in keeping aloof from all the various religious sects and denominations around them.

THE END.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

SCOTTISH EPISCOPACY AND SCOTTISH
EPISCOPALIANS.

Three Sermons

Preached in St. James' Episcopal Chapel, Cruden.

THE
UNCHANGEABLE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION,
AND THE EVER-VARYING SYSTEMS OF
HUMAN DEVICE.

A SERMON, PREACHED IN ST. PETER'S CHAPEL, PETERHEAD,
ON THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1835.

Being the Day appointed as a PUBLIC FAST, by the
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

* * * *A cheap Edition of THE OLD PATHS will be
published for the use of Schools, and for distribution
by Clergymen and others.*











Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01011 7069